

# **Fightback**

*Struggle, Solidarity, Socialism*



## **Fascism & Anti-Fascism**

MAY 2018



Quarterly magazine published by *Fightback*

ISSN: 1177-074, Vol. 5 No. 1, Issue 29

Co-ordinating Editor for this issue: Daphne Lawless

Editorial Board: Bronwen Beechey, Gayaal Iddamalgoda,  
Daphne Lawless, Joe McClure, Ben Ritchie, Ani White

Contact us at:

<http://fightback.org.nz>

Post: PO Box 10-282, Dominion Road, Auckland 1164,  
New Zealand

Email: [fightback.australasia@gmail.com](mailto:fightback.australasia@gmail.com)

Phone: +64 272209552 (New Zealand); +61 4 345 39905  
(Australia)

Subscriptions:

\$60 (AU/NZ) print

\$20 (AU/NZ) PDF/EPUB

Layout and Cover Art: Izzy Joy



---

## CONTENTS

- 4 Editorial
- 5 What is Fascism? An Introduction
- 8 The Red-Brown “zombie plague”: how fascist ideas are becoming popular on the Left
- 28 When communists thought centrists were as bad as fascists...
- 30 The Rothschild Meme
- 32 Race & Reaction in New Zealand 1880-1950: A Pre-History of the Far Right
- 40 Flashback: “Nazis Humiliated”
- 42 Fascism in Australia: An interview with slackbastard
- 48 Fighting the Fash since 1932: a history of Antifa in Germany
- 51 Why we say: no platform for fascists
- 53 How White Nationalism Courts Internet Nerd Culture
- 63 Antifa vs. Milo Yiannopoulos: Who won?
- 66 Why the Far Right’s Rallying Cry of a Leftist ‘Civil War’ Is No Laughing Matter
- 68 Blair Peach: Aotearoa’s anti-fascist martyr
- 70 Fightback’s Ten-Point Programme

# Editorial

DAPHNE LAWLESS



**W**elcome the first “trans-Tasman” issue of *Fightback* magazine. Our recent successful crowdfunding campaign has allowed us to expand our reach, aiming to provide analysis and important information for the activist Left in both Australia and New Zealand.

Anti-fascism has been such a touchstone for the Left since the Second World War that it seems ridiculous to even question it. However, we face the disturbing possibility that the ineffectiveness so far of leftist “resistance” to the current global wave of Right-wing, racist, reactionary mass movements (often with consciously fascist elements at their core) can be traced to *confusion about what Fascism really is*.

As Daphne Lawless argues in this issue, the era of neoliberal globalisation has been characterised by the misuse of “fascism” as a kind of swear-word to describe any vaguely authoritarian political movement, or indeed anything the author doesn’t like – including neoliberalism itself, whose credo of a globalised market making all the choices is anathema to everything that actual fascists have ever promoted.

Conversely, the decline of the workers’ movement as a whole, not to mention the Marxist current within it, has meant the decline of class-based, materialist analyses of capitalism on the activist Left. Into this gap (with the help of certain capitalist states’ propaganda) has poured various brands of conspiracy theory,

which analyse neoliberal globalisation as the results of the machinations of a small group of “evil, corrupt people” (or reptilian aliens). This is a position which has the benefit of being very easy to understand, much easier than Marxism. It is also the same belief held by fascists.

*Fightback* believes that that the anti-capitalist, radical and activist Left is doomed if we do not resolutely reject this mashing-up of socialist ideas with fascist poison into a “Red-Brown” amalgam. We are distressed when we see good activists replace international solidarity with all the oppressed with support for conservative, authoritarian dictators, or reactionary mass movements, on the grounds that they are “anti-imperialist”. We offer no apologies for seeing the need to challenge and confront these ideas wherever we see them on the activist Left. In the long run, perhaps only a thorough regroupment of anti-capitalists which rejects Red-Brown politics in total will stop the rot.

As well as a couple of other articles on the history of anti-fascist organisation in New Zealand, we offer large articles and interviews introducing the background of the anti-fascist struggle in Australia, in Germany, and – for something completely different – the “furry” fandom and other online geek-culture space. Over the last 10 years, online “counter-cultural” forums such as 4chan have moved from using Nazi symbology for shock value to becoming actual fascist cadre whose support has been recognized as invaluable to putting Donald Trump into the White House. For those people who still think that cyberspace is the domain of “keyboard warriors” with no impact on the real world, Deo’s article should be a major wakeup call.

*“Will England become a fascist state? / The answer lies at your own gate / And in that answer lies your fate”.* So sang Linton Kwesi Johnson in his “Reggae fi Peach”, commemorating the New Zealand-born teacher beaten to death by cops on an anti-fascist rally in London in 1979. It seemed appropriate that our anti-fascism episode should end with a piece on Blair Peach, who paid the ultimate price for resisting not only fascism, but the power structure which can live with fascism more easily than it can with working people standing up for themselves. When it comes to the fight against fascism, there’s no justice – there’s just us.



# What is fascism?

## An introduction

By DAPHNE LAWLESS

Part of the problem with any discussion of fascism today is the widespread ignorance about what that word actually means. This comes from decades after the defeat of the Fascist states in World War 2, since when “fascist” has been used and overused as the worst swear-word possible on the Left (and by parts of the Right). This is the “everyone I don’t like is Hitler” method of arguing, often mocked in internet memes.

A slightly more sophisticated use of “fascism” is just to indicate any authoritarian or dictatorial government. One example of this “10 steps to fascism” which were drawn up by the American writer Naomi Wolf – and were often overused in the period of the Iraq war to be able to “prove” that the US government under George W. Bush was fascist<sup>1</sup>.

We can only say now that, if the “Dubya” administration was fascist, then there are no words left to describe the current Trump administration (of which more later).

At the other extreme, there is an attitude that only the regime of Benito Mussolini and the National Fascist Party in Italy from 1922-1945 can be called “fascism”. By these standards, not even Nazi Germany counts as fascism, let alone any other similar regimes across the years – or even the successor parties of Italian Fascism, such as CasaPound or Forza Nuova, which carefully state both their admiration for and their differences from *Il Duce* and his regime. This means that this method is not useful for our analysis here – which is precisely about how the Left should be responding to “fascist-like” organizations and movements.

The definition of fascism which I am using in this article is mainly based on that of the exiled Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, who watched the growth of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany with horror at the inability of the Stalin-led global communist movement to counter it<sup>2</sup>. As I’m going to use it in this article, **fascism** means:

1. a bottom-up movement, which while it might be funded by some parts of big business, is based on the support and activism of the insecure middle classes and the most impoverished layers of society;
2. which promotes the idea of the “traditional” nation as one big community, and seeks to defeat and eliminate “outsiders” or “traitors” who are seen as threatening that community. These might be “corporates” or “international bankers” (distinguished from honest local capitalists), “greedy” workers’ unions, LGBT people, religious or ethnic minorities, immigrants or anyone who promotes ideas which are seen to threaten the nation’s traditions – such as socialists, liberals, feminists, “cosmopolitans” (people who see themselves as citizens of the world and embrace cultures and ideas from overseas), or even any kind of intellectual;
3. which promotes a myth of what British social theorist Roger Griffin called *palingenesis*, a word meaning “rebirth, or return to the good old days”<sup>3</sup>;
4. which is not afraid to use, or even glorifies the use of, violence to achieve these goals;

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/apr/24/usa.comment>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palingenetic\\_ultranationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palingenetic_ultranationalism)

5. which opposes the ideas of the “Enlightenment” (and of socialism) such as democracy, rationality and equal justice, and promotes a traditional authoritarian model of a (usually male) Leader who is always right. Author Max Bray comments: ““Fascism emerged as a rejection of the rationalism of the Enlightenment... It was really founded on an emotional appeal towards power and domination.”<sup>4</sup>

If you read part 2 above carefully, you might be able to see why the Jewish minority in Germany were a perfect scapegoat for Hitler’s fascist movement. A religious and an ethnic minority at the same time, many of whose members were successful intellectuals and business people, but also including many socialist and working-class leaders, who – as a people scattered across the globe – could not help but be “cosmopolitan”, not 100% “German” in the eyes of many of their neighbours.

Anti-fascist author Alexander Reid Ross, however, points out that fascism is sometimes hard to identify and call out because it has always been a *syncretic* movement. That means that fascists will take over whatever icons and ideas happen to be popular among the movements, from either left or right, trying to appeal to “all the people all the time”. Ross comments:

[The original fascists] ...stole symbols and language from the left-wing workers’ movement, but redirected it towards wildly different goals... this difficulty in forming a definition is built into fascism itself... taking elements from both the political left and right, but always striving towards greater levels of social hierarchy and domination.<sup>5</sup>

For example, fascists might present themselves as anti-Zionist when trying to appeal to a left-wing, pro-Palestinian audience, but on the other hand might strongly *support* Israel when trying to appeal to an Islamophobic right-wing audience. (Fascism is not *necessarily* anti-Semitic; and even many anti-Semitic fascists may support the State of Israel because they want all the world’s Jews sent to live there.) In this sense, a fascist group acts like a *parasite* feeding off the movements – like a cuckoo laying its eggs in other birds’ nests (ironically exactly the kind of metaphor they would themselves use to smear migrant communities).

A recent example in New Zealand is the fascist groups who attempted to join the Occupy move-

ments and the mass street demonstrations against the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – attempting to harness public hatred of globalised neoliberal capitalism to their own conspiracy theories about how ethnic “outsiders” (Chinese or Jewish, usually) are to blame for our economic problems and avoiding any critique of “our own” capitalists. It is worth noting that the American far-right uses “anti-capitalist” language to target the liberal-tending Hollywood culture industry, as well as the Jewish liberal billionaire George Soros.

For those of us in the revolutionary socialist movement, it is most important to try to understand fascism as a *movement*, rather than a regime. This is for three reasons:

1. No fascist movement has ever seized power on its own – they have *always* taken power with the support of other right-wing or ruling class forces. Hitler was invited into a coalition government by the big German conservative parties; Mussolini was appointed Prime Minister by the King of Italy. The Spanish dictator Francisco Franco led a regime in which a fascist party, the *Falange*, was only part of a coalition with capitalist and monarchist forces. Military dictatorships which took on fascist-like traits after they seized power are a different matter
2. With its violent methods of organizing, a fascist movement can create great damage and terror to workers, leftists and all marginalized or oppressed people, while still being far away from ever taking state power. It must therefore be fought on the streets and in our communities as soon as it raises its ugly head.
3. The syncretic and parasitic nature of fascism, “blending into the background” of popular movements, means that it is sometimes *very difficult* to spot when you are not looking for it. Sadly, many sincere Leftists may unwittingly fall for fascist ideology if it is cunningly disguised as anti-capitalist populism. I will attempt to argue in my second article on the “Red-brown convergence” that this is precisely what has happened for a large and perhaps dominant section of the global activist Left in the era of Trump, Brexit and the Syrian war.

The big question you’re waiting for is this: are we saying that *US President Donald Trump is a fascist*? The question is to some degree not relevant. Donald Trump is clearly a racist, sexist and objectionable person on every level, but it’s impossible to look into his mind and find out what he really believes. He is clearly fuelled by ego and narcissism rather than any properly thought-out politics. But the

<sup>4</sup> <https://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/what-is-fascism-anyway?>

<sup>5</sup> <https://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/what-is-fascism-anyway?>



same is true of Benito Mussolini, who once edited the Italian Socialist Party newspaper.

As for the US government, it is clearly not (yet?) a fascist regime. It is a site of struggle between many different ruling-class and middle-class forces, with some parts of the Federal government backing Trump's agenda (e.g. the immigration cops) and others resisting (much of the FBI). Trump's power is still contingent on the sometimes-unwilling acceptance of traditional conservatives in the Republican party, who could unite with their Democratic party opponents to obstruct or even impeach him. However, for now, the big-business backers of Trump (such as the secretive Mercer family) and their willing servants in Congress seem to be willing to go along with Trump, as long as he signs huge tax cuts into law and as long as he doesn't damage the profitability of their investments.

On the other hand, the Trump-backing *movement* is – as survey after survey has shown – based not on the “economically anxious” working class, but on relatively well-off whites, especially but not entirely white men<sup>6</sup>. This social movement is racist and xenophobic, looking back to an American “good old days” which never really existed except in fantasy, motivated mainly by hatred and resentment towards Muslims, migrant communities, African-Americans, feminists and queers. The slogan *Make America Great Again* is almost the definition of Griffin's idea of “palingenesis”.

Perhaps most disturbingly, with the help of the compliant FOX News TV channel, Trump has successfully trained his base to rely on his pronouncements (usually via Twitter) as the real truth, no matter what inconvenient facts might be reported elsewhere. The Trumpists angrily reject any mainstream media coverage which disagrees with their prejudices, and happily accept the truth of Trump's increasingly erratic claims as long as they confirm their own feelings of entitlement and victimhood.

While the Trump administration is so far only a particularly nasty right-wing capitalist government, the *base* of Trump's support, the crowds at his rallies, the social media mobs who phone in death threats to people who criticise him, fit our model of a fascist movement almost perfectly. And it is Trump's incredibly fortuitous victory as President which has encouraged these elements to “come out of the woodwork” and to yell their abuse and commit sometimes-deadly violence in public. This movement may well decide many “primary” elections for Republican congressional candidates in the safe “red” states, and even those Republican Con-

gresspeople who might privately despise Trump and recognize him as a would-be tyrant will pander to his base if and when necessary.

In general, in times of peace and prosperity, the ruling factions in capitalist society want nothing to do with fascists, who are considered unpredictable and uncouth. However, in times of crisis, some parts of big business might see a fascist movement as their ally. The lessons of history show that a sufficiently greedy, venal or frightened ruling class will tolerate a fascist movement's violence, or even invite it into power, if they think there is political capital in doing so. A fascist movement, based as it is on parasitism and on the shifting prejudices of alienated and despairing individuals, can only take power if invited to do so. With their “God-Emperor” Trump in the White House, American fascism is not in power, but it has a “foot in the door”.

What happens in the United States is often a ghastly foreboding of what will happen in the rest of the advanced capitalist world. The only way, therefore, to defend not only the hopes of socialism but the basic freedoms which come from capitalist liberal democracy, is for socialists to *disperse and disrupt fascist movements on the ground*, so that they can never accumulate enough social and political capital to be seen as a base worth pandering to. We will return to the question of exactly how anti-fascist activism works in practice, further in this issue.

---

<sup>6</sup> See for example <https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/12/15/16781222/trump-racism-economic-anxiety-study> and <https://monthlyreview.org/2017/04/01/neofascism-in-the-white-house>.



# The Red-Brown “zombie plague”: how fascist ideas are becoming popular on the Left

By DAPHNE LAWLESS

## Preface

This analysis follows on from that in three previous articles of mine which have previously appeared in *Fightback* publications:

- “Against Campism”, November 2015<sup>1</sup>
- “Against Conservative Leftism”, February 2016<sup>2</sup>
- “Trump, Brexit, Syria... and conservative leftism, December 2016”<sup>3</sup>

The second and third articles are collected in our *Fightback* pamphlet *What is Conservative Leftism?*. In what follows, references to articles in that pamphlet will be cited with *WiCL* and the page number.

<sup>1</sup> <https://fightback.org.nz/2015/11/05/against-campism-what-makes-some-leftists-support-putin/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fightback.org.nz/2016/02/15/against-conservative-leftism/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://fightback.org.nz/2016/12/20/trump-brexit-syria-and-conservative-leftism/>



## Introduction: Conspiracy theories and “pod people”

When I wrote “Against Conservative Leftism” just over two years ago, I considered it disturbing that socialists would rally to support New Zealand’s colonial-era flag. If I was disturbed then, there are no words left to describe how to feel in an era when committed revolutionary activists – people who have an honourable track record of struggle in favour of a classless society and against all oppression – are happy to argue that the recent chemical warfare attacks against rebel-held towns in Syria are a “false flag”, something faked by the US state or its allies to justify an invasion. Even one of my favourite musicians has recently repeated such baseless slander from the concert stage.

It’s a toss-up whether this version is more sickening than the alternative line, that the attacks were real but were carried out by the rebels themselves – that is, the rebels murdered their own children in order to manipulate foreign opinion. This is not the place to take these conspiracy theories to pieces – this has been admirably done already by many sources, for example Bellingcat<sup>4</sup> or Snopes<sup>5</sup>. The British ecosocialist writer George Monbiot also ably dismantled previous Syrian regime chemical warfare denial last year<sup>6</sup>. The question – among others – that I wish to deal with here is of the similarity between this behaviour and the behaviour of the Right-wing conspiracy theorists who regularly yell FALSE FLAG to every mass killing in the United States – from the 9/11/2001 attacks in New York to the depressingly regular mass shootings in schools.

It’s common sense in liberal and Left circles that ideas like “9/11 Truth”, the theories that Barack Obama’s birth certificate was forged, or that the victims of the Sandy Hook or Parkland school shootings were “crisis actors”, are wild fantasies either made up by the bigoted and ill-informed to justify their prejudices, or else false narratives being deliberately fed to such people (for profit or political gain) by unscrupulous media operatives such as FOX News or Alex Jones’ InfoWars. We are appalled when parents of school shooting victims are harassed by unhinged strangers calling them conspiracy operatives and telling them that their dead children never existed.

And yet this is precisely what much of the Western Left has been doing to the people whose children died of chlorine poisoning in the basements of

Douma, Syria. Experienced Western journalist Robert Fisk even took a trip to Douma – courtesy of the Syrian government – to find an anonymous doctor who would confirm such fantasies<sup>7</sup>. This, while actual Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) inspectors were still barred from the site, so that the regime and its allies could make the evidence disappear<sup>8</sup>.

The motivation is clear. “False flag” theories are based on the idea that elaborate lies are being told by a secret conspiracy to manipulate public opinion, and that mainstream sources are part of this conspiracy. Alex Jones claims that school shootings are arranged/faked by the US state (or a secret faction within it, known as the “Deep State”) to take away US citizens’ rights to bear arms. The Left argues the same about atrocities in Syria, only the goal of the conspirators is to build support for a “regime change” invasion of Syria. Similar stories are currently circulating on Leftist social media about the protests against social welfare cuts in Nicaragua, and their murderous suppression by that country’s government (search “Nicaragua CIA” on Twitter). The far-Right and the Left end up with the same narrative – *there is a conspiracy within the current US State to fake atrocities and protest movements so as to expand its influence, which must be pushed back*. In fact, American fascists are just as keen as any on the US Left to deny chemical attacks in Syria – the Snopes article cited above reproduces a tweet from alt-right celebrity and star of the famous “punch in the face” video, Richard Spencer, doing just that.

The question is not whether states have ever faked attacks to justify interventions (there is evidence that the US intervention in Vietnam began with one<sup>9</sup>). The question is the willingness of the Left to act like FOX News or InfoWars followers, to use the logical fallacy known as the “argument from consequences” to deny inconvenient facts and reporting. The fallacy goes like this: if X is true, it would lead to political consequences I oppose; therefore, X cannot be true. And any evidence that X is true is, as Donald Trump would put it, “FAKE NEWS”. If all we wish to do is to oppose US intervention in the Syrian war (ignoring for the moment that the US has been involved in the Syrian war since 2014, launching over 1000 air strikes against the “Islamic State” group), then denying the Assad regime’s chemical warfare atrocities is *simply not necessary*. All we have to do is argue that US attacks on the Assad regime would

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2018/04/13/douma-fake-news/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.snopes.com/news/2018/04/12/disinformation-conspiracy-trolling-syrian-chemical-attack/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/15/lesson-from-syria-chemical-weapons-conspiracy-theories-alt-right>

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180421-fake-news-the-mainstreaming-of-syria-conspiracy-theories/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/16/syria-chemical-attack-inspectors-unable-to-access-douma-site>

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf\\_of\\_Tonkin\\_incident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Tonkin_incident)

not prevent such atrocities, or otherwise make things worse.

Robin Yassin-Kassab, co-author of the essential text on the Syrian conflict *Burning Country*, recently discussed his run-ins with Western activists bending his ear about how “the Rothschilds” or “pipelines” were the secret behind all Middle-Eastern conflicts, and commented:

Arabs and Muslims are notoriously vulnerable to conspiratorial thinking, in part because in a previous generation so much politics was actually done by conspiracy, and in part through intellectual laziness. It’s always been simpler to blame ‘the Jews’ or ‘the Shia’ for all ills than to actually address the ills. But not really simpler. Conspiracy theories don’t merely promote complacent inaction, they create new tragedies too. In north western Pakistan, for instance, where word spread that the polio inoculation was a UN poison to render Muslims infertile, a new generation has been stunted by the disease.

Perhaps there’s more excuse for conspiracism in regions where the people are subject to the traumas of poverty, dictatorship and war. If so, its increasing prevalence in the educated, prosperous West is more difficult to explain.<sup>10</sup>

So, what is behind the enthusiasm of the Western activist Left for these denialist narratives? The argument that I wish to make in this article is as follows:

1. the growing willingness of Left activists to believe ideologically-convenient conspiracy theory over well-supported reporting is *part of a growing convergence of Leftist and far-right rhetoric*, in particular around the ongoing war in Syria. While – with some exceptions to be discussed - Leftists do not openly or consciously align themselves with fascists, many increasingly accept ideas that are disquietingly close to fascist narratives. The idea of a politics which unifies Leftists and fascists has historically been known by many names, including Strasserism, Third Position or *Querfront* (German for “cross-front”). In this article I will use the well-established term *red-brown*; brown taken from the Nazi “brownshirts” (stormtroopers).
2. This “Red-Brown” convergence is based on a political *misrecognition* of neoliberal

globalism as a conspiracy of the US and other Western countries for global domination, rather than a strategy adopted by the global capitalist class as a whole. This has led the Left into an “anti-imperialism” which is in fact nationalism under another name; which leads to *programmatically* unity with fascists who support authoritarian “ethno-states”.

3. This is a problem which cuts across the “revolutionary/reformist” division on the Left. A strong base of this thinking is found in the revitalised “Marxist-Leninist” (ML) trend on the Internet, but the acceptance of nationalism, traditionalism and anti-rationalism which I have previously called “conservative leftism” has a long history in both the social-democratic and Communist traditions on the Left, including the support base of British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.
4. This convergence is encouraged by the propaganda/intelligence branches of the Russian state, for its own geopolitical reasons. But it is also perpetuated by an unwillingness for socialists (who have lived through decades of isolations) to struggle among themselves over political line; or, worse, a more-or-less conscious rejection of international solidarity in favour of keeping the biggest “broad front” at home. Finally, there is a small contingent of people associated with the Left who have discarded anti-fascist principle and now actively support a *Querfront* (with the Russian state, the US “alt-right” and even the Trump administration) against neoliberal globalism. While this explicit alliance makes up a minority of the left, it must be actively fought.’

Some Leftists on social media have expressed their bemusement at their erstwhile comrades coming out with conspiracy theories in support of the brutal authoritarian regime in Syria. Some have jokingly used the term “pod people” – an image taken from the old horror film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, where people are replaced by clones grown in pods by alien invaders. I prefer to use another science-fiction trope – that of a “zombie plague”. As I see it, Red-Brown politics is *the intellectual equivalent of an infectious disease* that has taken hold in a lot of the Left and led to a lot of good comrades taking up positions which have led to them supporting fascist positions. I continue to believe that there is a “cure” for this plague, that good activists can be won back from such positions, and that articles such as this one may play a part in doing so.

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://qunfuz.com/2016/08/09/inland-american-conspiracies/>



## Class politics or geopolitics? – against “alt-imperialism”

In a piece from August last year, British-Pakistani academic and journalist Idrees Ahmed ably summed up what he calls as the “alt-left” trend in Western politics. His article is worth reading in full if you’re not already aware of the situation<sup>11</sup>, but here are some salient extracts:

...a strain of leftism that sees liberalism rather than fascism as the main enemy. It is distinguished mainly by a reactionary contrarianism, a seething resentment, and a conspiracist worldview.

In its preoccupations it is closer to the right: More alarmed by Hillary Clinton winning the primary than by Donald Trump winning the presidency; more concerned with imagined “deep state” conspiracies than with actual Russian subversion of US democracy; eager to prevent a global war no one is contemplating but supportive of a US alliance with Russia for a new “war on terror”.

Like the right it disdains “globalists”, it sees internationalism as liberal frivolity, and its solidarity is confined to repressive regimes overseas....

For the alt-left, Hillary Clinton’s call for a no-fly zone to protect Syria’s civilians was proof that she wanted a global war. Donald Trump on the other hand was going to protect America from WWII because of his “non-interventionist mindset” (Glenn Greenwald).

Jill Stein and Susan Sarandon both insisted that Trump was “the lesser evil”. Even his bombings were “consistent with the particular ‘non-interventionist’ outlook” (Greenwald & Tracey).

These arguments turned out to be convincing to a small but significant minority of the US voting population – which was enough to set us down the path we are on now. The 10% of people who voted for Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary who went on to vote for Trump in the general election may well have tipped the balance<sup>12</sup>.

As suggested above, I do not believe that this kind

of politics is becoming more and more prevalent because of a *conscious* softening to fascism (in the majority of cases). In part, it is an outcome of the developing logic of the “conservative leftist” arguments which I have argued have become hegemonic on the Western Left – arguments based on nationalism, traditionalism and anti-rationalism. But more recently, these ideas have been assiduously propagated by extremely well-resourced media networks (both state-directed and corporate), which has led even staunch anti-fascists to adopt positions and arguments which agree with fascist principles.

The most pressing issue, as I see it, is that a sizeable part (perhaps a majority) of liberal and Left opinion in the West has adopted a one-sided view of imperialism, which has more to do with fascist ideas than the socialist tradition. In Vladimir Lenin’s classic analysis, made against other socialists who thought that capitalist globalisation would lead to world peace, imperialism is “the most recent phase (also translated “highest stage”) of capitalism”<sup>13</sup>. Against Karl Kautsky, who believed that capitalist globalisation might lead to an end to war, Lenin argued that the international expansion of capitalist firms and their fusion with state power would inevitably lead to military rivalries for markets and resources.

However, it seems much of the Left has (openly or quietly) has instead adopted an idea that “imperialism” only applies to the United States, or the group of advanced capitalist countries of which the US is generally seen to be the leader. States like Russia or China, by this analysis, cannot be imperialist by definition. And as neoliberal globalisation is seen as only the latest ploy by US-centric imperialism to achieve global domination, neoliberalism, globalisation/“globalism”, imperialism and “Western” power are all collapsed into meaning the same thing. This *conspiratorial* analysis of neoliberal globalism views the phenomenon as a ploy of one state, faction of states, or actors within a state to gain global domination. On the contrary, a *systematic* analysis of neoliberal globalism, following on from Lenin’s, reads neoliberalism and globalization a reaction of the global capitalist system as a whole to expand its profits. The latter points towards global solidarity of the oppressed; the former puts the Left in the same camp as fascists. (I will discuss what I see as the intellectual origins of this interpretation of “imperialism” on the Left later on in this article.)

The most obvious “outbreak” of this Red-Brown zombie plague is the debate on the ongoing conflict in Syria. Since the foreign policy of the US state under President Barack Obama and Secretary of

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2017/8/25/the-alt-left-is-real-and-its-helping-fascists>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/24/545812242/1-in-10-sanders-primary-voters-ended-up-supporting-trump-survey-finds>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/>

State Hillary Clinton (the high point of neoliberalism to date) was to confront Russian expansion and give support (if half-heartedly) to the “Arab Spring” liberation movements, then these movements have become seen as enemies (“US proxies” and/or “terrorists”) by many Leftists. To be blunt, for much of the “anti-imperialist Left”, for Bashar al-Assad to gas children to death in a basement is preferable than for the United States or other Western countries to interfere with this in any way. But Russian or Iranian interference to *support* Assad is not a problem worth talking about, let alone demonstrating about. In this, the “alt-imperialist” Left is precisely mimicking the arguments of the fascist Right – as seen when fascists march alongside Left anti-imperialists against Western intervention in Syria, both carrying pictures of Assad and Putin.

In what follows, I wish to take a deep dive into a couple of articles from Leftists – not among those consciously supporting the Assad regime or Russian foreign policy, but what are on the surface “anti-fascist” articles repeating as common sense the very ideas that have allowed fascist activists to walk hand-in-hand with anti-imperialist Leftists on the Syria issue.

My first example is respected US Marxist John Bellamy Foster. In the middle of a generally excellent article arguing that the Trump administration is indeed neo-fascist, the author gives the following summary of US foreign policy over the last decade:

The push of NATO into the Ukraine, supporting a *right-wing coup* in the attempt to check Russia as a reemerging superpower, led to a Russian pushback under Vladimir Putin, with the annexation of the Crimea and intervention in the Ukraine along its borders. Russia further responded by aggressively intervening in Syria, undermining the attempt by the United States, NATO and Saudi Arabia to bring down the Assad regime by supporting *surrogate pro-Salafist forces (committed to the creation of a fundamentalist Sunni state)* ... The main part of the ruling class and the national security state was strongly committed to a new Cold War with Russia, with Hillary Clinton vowing to introduce no-fly zones in Syria, which would have meant shooting down Russian as well as Syrian planes, *bringing the world to the brink of global thermonuclear war*<sup>14</sup>. (emphases added)

The talking points emphasised above – that the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich’s government by the “Euromaidan” movement in Ukraine in 2014

<sup>14</sup> <https://monthlyreview.org/2017/04/01/neofascism-in-the-white-house>

was a “right wing coup”; that the Syrian rebels are “pro-Salafist... fundamentalist Sunni”, and that a pushback against Russian support for the Assad regime would risk “thermonuclear war” – could have come straight from a Russian Embassy press release. A cursory Google search will show that they are at best misleading half-truths and at worst nothing but Russian propaganda. To give an obvious illustration, Turkish forces shot down a Russian plane over Syria in 2015<sup>15</sup> – and Donald Trump conducted missile strikes against Assad regime targets in April 2017 and in April 2018. Yet, curiously, thermonuclear war hasn’t broken out yet.

Similarly, Australian anarchist academic Ben Debney approvingly quotes Gary Leupp writing on the website *Counterpunch*, a website which has been a source for a lot of Assadist propaganda over the last five years, that among good reasons not to support Hillary Clinton over Trump were:

various U.S. interventions during the “Arab Spring;” the U.S./NATO assault on Libya that destroyed that *modern state*, etc.<sup>16</sup> (emphasis added)

Debney goes on to argue that “the fifty-three percent of white females who voted for [Trump] might have felt that having a woman president of the order of a Neocon [neo-conservative] by Any Other Name wasn’t the most liberating option on the table for women”. Similarly, Bellamy Foster argues that the Obama/Clinton pushback on Russia led to a pro-Russian split in the ruling class, whose interests are expressed through Donald Trump.

The argument that both writers are making is that the rise of Trumpist neofascism, or protofascism, was in part fuelled by the neoliberals’ “hawkish” foreign policy. By this, they mean supporting the insurgency which brought down Muammar Qaddafi’s dictatorial, murderous “modern state” in Syria; supporting certain rebel forces in Syria (some of whom but not all could be described as Islamist or “Salafist”<sup>1</sup>); or pushing against Russian interests in Eastern Europe.

Worse yet, Trump is sometimes even seen as a lesser evil – not because he is any less militaristic than Obama or the Clintons, but because he is *on the same side as Russia*. Every bomb dropped on “Islamic State” targets such as Raqqa is fine by Leftists who are only concerned about whether Russia supports such mayhem or not (and it does).

<sup>15</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015\\_Russian\\_Sukhoi\\_Su-24\\_shootdown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_Russian_Sukhoi_Su-24_shootdown)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/03/hillary-clintons-foreign-policy-resume-what-the-record-shows/>, quoted in <https://libcom.org/library/role-left-rise-far-right-populism>



One particularly confused American Marxist-Leninist organisation put it like this:

... a Clinton presidency would have been more dangerous for the international working class and the oppressed peoples of the world... A President Clinton could have led in short order to a major war between Russia and the USA... (*Ray O'Light Newsletter*, November-December 2016, p. 4).

Fascism as a lesser evil to confrontation with Russia? Firstly, as American journalist Charles Davis has written on several occasions<sup>17</sup>, Trump's foreign policy was *openly* more militaristic than Clinton's. He actually promised before the election to *expand* the existing US/allied bombing campaign against "Islamic State" targets in Syria. No-one who had a principled position against US military interventions could have supported Trump over Clinton. But it was certainly possible if you supported Russian policy in, for example, Ukraine and Syria, and wanted the US to fall in line with that policy.

Curiously absent, too, from these criticisms of neoliberal "hawkery" is *any concern with the interests and agency of the people of the territories concerned themselves*. NATO intervened to support an uprising against Qadhafi; but why was there an uprising? Why would Syrians form armed factions, even ones with a conservative "Salafist" programme, in opposition to their regime? Why would many Ukrainians support parties seeking to join the NATO imperialist alliance as a "lesser evil" to domination by Russian interests? Surely that's the first thing that socialists or anarchists, devoted to radical democracy from below, should be asking? (I will return to this "Orientalist" view of the Middle East later.)

Writing 20 years ago, the late American socialist academic Moishe Postone set out the argument against this kind of politics:

What the Cold War seems to have eradicated from memory ... is that opposition to an imperial power is not necessarily progressive, that there were fascist "anti-imperialisms" as well. This distinction was blurred during the Cold War in part because the USSR aligned itself with authoritarian regimes, for example, in the Middle East, that had little in common with socialist and communist movements, that, if anything, had more in common with fascism than communism and that, in fact, sought to liquidate their own Left. Consequently, anti-Americanism per se became

coded as progressive, although there had and have been deeply reactionary as well as progressive forms of anti-Americanism.<sup>18</sup>

Examples of pre-Cold War "fascist anti-imperialism" could be Imperial Japan's appeal against British and French imperialism to justify its expansion into east Asia, or Lehi, the Zionist paramilitary group in British-ruled Palestine who were explicitly fascist at some stages and Red-Brown at others<sup>19</sup>.

What Postone is calling out here is what I have previously called out as "campism", but which could also be called **Red-Brown anti-imperialism** - or even, on the model of Idrees Ahmed's "alt-leftism", **alt-imperialism**. This is the politics where imperialism is seen only as coming from one country, or one alliance of countries, and is contrasted to the "national sovereignty" of various regimes - no matter how autocratic, rather than in favour of the self-determination and autonomy of peoples. Lebanese journalist Joey Hussein Ayoub has given the name "essentialist anti-imperialism" to the same phenomenon: "defined solely in relation to [one's] own governments rather than on the basis of a universal opposition to all forms of imperialism."<sup>20</sup>

Amar Diwarkar argues that this is not so much a conscious embrace of Fascist politics, but:

a tactical tolerance of the far-right's nativist anti-establishment logic to accelerate the dissolution of the ruling order and bring about a transitional phase preceding social transformation. However, by eliminating the dimension of the international from its purview, what remains is a strikingly non-radical relativism. Its underlying logic is one that is infused with a colonial unconscious; a conviction that Western agency is the eternal subject and locus of motion – the prime mover of History.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, although Debney is an anarchist who strongly criticises the Soviet state in Russia, his arguments about how "neoliberalism helped lead to Trump" are in fact in line with that very state-centric Cold War leftism which supported the USSR as the "lesser evil" against capitalist imperialism. Struggles of ordinary people in the Middle East and Eastern Europe are seen in this framework entirely through the lens of whether US "power" is extended thereby. The governments of Assad in Syria, Qadhafi in Libya or Yanukovych in Ukraine are not seen in

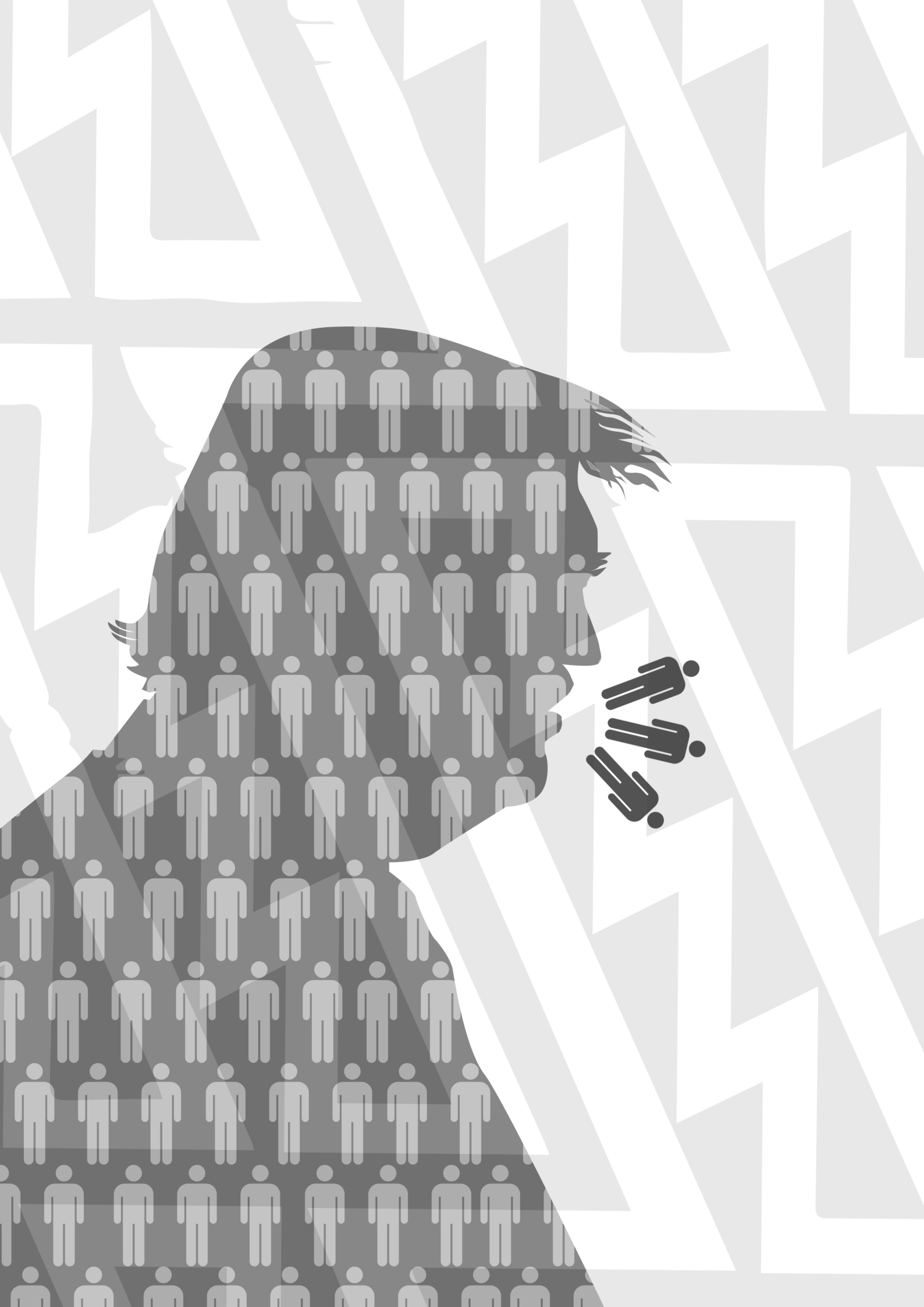
<sup>17</sup>For example, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/04/12/what-betrayal-on-war-trump-has-delivered-as-promised/>

<sup>18</sup><https://libcom.org/library/history-hopelessness>

<sup>19</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lehi\\_\(militant\\_group\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lehi_(militant_group))

<sup>20</sup><https://raseef22.com/en/blog/2016/08/17/syria-is-the-world/>

<sup>21</sup><https://splinteredeye.wordpress.com/2018/02/28/the-permutations-of-assadism/>



relationship to the people over whom they claim authority, but whether they support or oppose the supposed designs of United States foreign policy. The argument is not over “militarism”, but of instinctive support for any state which is seen to oppose US foreign policy - and if they are supported by Russian foreign policy, so much the better.

Bellamy Foster and Debney demonstrate that even those Leftists who recognize the warning signs of fascism in his “base” see Trump as a possible counter-balance to those parts of the US federal government who supposedly plot global domination via neoliberal globalization. In another recent example of this, Senator Bernie Sanders, the great “left-wing” hope in the 2016 election against Clintonite neoliberalism, expressed qualified support for Trump’s protectionist economics<sup>22</sup>. Whether the bad guys are called the “military-industrial complex” or “the Deep State”, the argument is precisely the same as that offered by those Rightists who admit Trump’s failings but see him as an “anti-politician” going into Washington to “combat the elites” and “drain the swamp”.

Bellamy Foster and Debney both make arguments that, in one way or another, “neoliberals did it to themselves”. This also mirrors an argument made by pro-Trump and other far-right forces. The Rightist version of the argument is to point to any support for multiculturalism, feminism or queer/trans rights and say: “This is why people voted for Trump” (Google that phrase for examples). A subtler one – heard on the Left as well as the Right – is the rightly-mocked “economic anxiety” argument, that Trump voters were motivated by poverty and insecurity caused by neoliberal economics. All these narratives have the same ideological basis – *to provide an alibi for Trump voters, to argue that Trump voters didn’t “really” support their candidate’s stated xenophobic, militaristic platform and his misogynist behaviour*.

The final word has to go to *Ray O’ Light Newsletter*, who agree with Debney and Bellamy Foster, in a simpler and more extreme form:

In our view, a fascist was elected U.S. president, but strong elements of fascism had already arrived here long before Trump’s election... with Trump as President, promoters of harmful illusions about Obama, Clinton and the Democrats... will be in a weaker position... It should not take too long before the white working masses who voted for Trump have had enough experience to begin a serious struggle against this reactionary billionaire. (November-December 2016, pp. 4-5).

In other words, the German Communists’ boast: *after Hitler, us!*, updated for a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.

Thus we see parts of the Left reading the victories of the far Right as an obstacle to or “payback” for neoliberal globalist overreach – or performatively shrugging, on the grounds that nothing real has changed or even that opportunities are opening up for the Left. They share a belief that Western imperialism is the great threat to the world, rather than Russian or Chinese expansionism or smaller authoritarian states; they agree that democracy is not to be trusted if it might be exploited by Islamist movements. They are state-centric (even anarchists such as Debney, or Noam Chomsky) and prize “stability and order” against democracy and self-determination. Their main interest in the growth of far-Right and Fascism movements globally is to use it as a stick to beat neoliberalism with. It’s as if 1933 never happened.

## How did we get here?

For an infection to spread, you need both a *germ* (a virus, a bacterium, a spore or similar) and a *vector* (something to carry and transmit the germ). It is my analysis that the *agent* of the Red-Brown plague is a political weakness on the radical Left which is at least as old as the shock of the September 11 2001 terrorist outrage in New York, and has roots going all the way back to the Russian revolution. I also argue that the *vector* of that plague – the reason it has suddenly blown up now – has been the weaponization of social media by very well resourced reactionary propaganda organizations, both those belonging to the Russian state and by far-Right Anglo-American moneyed interests. The second story is easier to tell, so we’ll start there.

## Vector 1: Information warfare, Russian and otherwise

The story is increasingly coming out of the extremely strong influence on not only the newly ascendant nationalist Right, but of much of the activist Left, of an extremely sophisticated propaganda and messaging operation led on one hand by agencies of the Russian state, and on the other hand by shadowy networks of right-wing billionaires. Recent exposés of Cambridge Analytica, the “big data” firm owned by the Mercer family (who also own the *Breitbart* network of white nationalist websites), have exposed its influence not only on the US presidential election of 2016, but on the UK “Brexit” referendum of the same year<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bernie-sanders-trump-diagnosed-the-problem-on-trade-but-his-solution-doesnt-work>

<sup>23</sup> See for example: <https://www.wired.com/story/how-russia-pushed-our-buttons-with-fake-online-ads/>



These were the biggest victories for right-wing nationalism in decades, even if some factions of the Left have attempted to claim them as victories for our side (an analysis I have rejected in previous articles – *WiCL*, pp. 33-40).

While the Mercers, and other US activist billionaires such as the Kochs, are mainly interested in dismantling liberal or neoliberal institutions which get in the way of their profitability, the Russian state-owned television news channel *RT* and a whole network of websites and social media “troll farms” are openly or secretly devoted to opposing to neoliberal globalisation and to US/EU interventionist foreign policy. US journalist Casey Michel gives an example of how this works in practice:

Consider one of the flagship magazines of the American left, which, for all its support of gay rights, government transparency, and voting rights as they pertain to U.S. society, has developed a notoriously soft spot for a regime that violently opposes all of the above.

*The Nation*’s coverage of Russian affairs is a national embarrassment. *RT* is a website that hosts neo-Nazis as “expert” commentators. Yet that does not stop *The Nation* from publishing whataboutist articles in defense of the propaganda channel; articles pushing the same argument, with the exact same headlines, as those found in white-nationalist publications.

*The Nation*’s crop of Russia watchers have lately busied themselves by lending credence to the “autonomy referendums” in eastern Ukraine, thus legitimizing illegal and neo-imperialist land-grabs, or notions that the entire Ukrainian crisis was “instigated by the West’s attempt... to smuggle [Ukraine] into NATO.”

That these views bizarrely mesh with those of Trump and his Breitbart-friendly advisers is perhaps another oddity of an age of ideological psychosis. Stephen Cohen, *The Nation*’s lead Russia analyst (and husband of the magazine’s editor in chief and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel), has even been endorsed by David Duke and the wife of white-nationalist Richard Spencer, the intellectual godfather of the pro-Trump “alt-right,” as a rare voice of sanity when it comes to U.S.-Russian relations.

At times, the substance and style of what has been dubbed the “alt-left” are indistinguishable from that of its counterpart on the other end of

the political spectrum. And Moscow’s info-warriors appear to appreciate the resemblance, as the American arm of Sputnik exhorted supporters of Bernie Sanders to vote for Trump (as did Trump himself, repeatedly).<sup>24</sup>

On Syria in particular, this Russian mediasphere has played the major role in amplifying the most despicable forms of conspiracy theory and victim-blaming about Syria, such as the British blogger Vanessa Beeley<sup>25</sup>. One common misconception, however, is that this is mainly a network of “bots”. Rather, the information warfare is as often or not carried out by real people, such as Ian Shilling<sup>26</sup> or Maram Susli<sup>27</sup>. British journalist Jonathan Freedland bemoans the efficacy of social media in discrediting traditional journalism:

It fits that social media is the weapon of choice. Its algorithms are proven to favour virality over veracity, spreading false stories faster and wider than true ones. A mysterious pro-Assad tweeter, with no other traceable existence online, has nearly as many followers as the BBC’s Middle East editor. Meanwhile, the top story on Google News the morning after the US presidential election hailed Trump as the winner of the popular vote – even though he had lost it by nearly 3m votes. The tribe tells itself what it wants to hear.<sup>28</sup>

French political scientist Anton Mukhamedov adds:

It is worth remembering that at the same time as imprisoning and torturing Russian leftists, the Russian state has been issuing calls for a “multipolar world”, a euphemism for a coalition of traditionalist and deeply reactionary “Eurasianist” powers fighting off what Aleksandr Dugin, a Russian National Bolshevik ideologue with ties to the Kremlin, refers to as “Atlanticism”, hence the support for far-right identitarian parties in Europe, white nationalists in the US, but also those anti-war groups who see collaboration with Russia as key to ensuring global peace. While Putin’s vision seems to be that of hegemonic powers left alone in their own sphere of interest,

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.thedailybeast.com/how-putin-played-the-far-left>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/vanessa-beeley-syria-white-helmets\\_uk\\_5ad9b6cae4b03c426dad48a9](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/vanessa-beeley-syria-white-helmets_uk_5ad9b6cae4b03c426dad48a9)

<sup>26</sup> [https://medium.com/@Brian\\_Whit/how-ian56-keeps-the-false-flags-flying-on-twitter-bf4567dfa54b](https://medium.com/@Brian_Whit/how-ian56-keeps-the-false-flags-flying-on-twitter-bf4567dfa54b)

<sup>27</sup> <https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/SyrianGirlPartisan>

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/20/trump-us-syria-truth-tribal-robert-mueller-white-helmets-factse?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/20/trump-us-syria-truth-tribal-robert-mueller-white-helmets-factse?CMP=share_btn_tw)

RT and other state outlets have been advancing the threat of a “new Cold War” to urge the political right and the political left to unite behind Russian power.<sup>29</sup>

Amar Diwarkar suggests in his excellent article “The Permutations of Assadism” that the model for this Russian discourse about Syria is in fact Israeli *hasbara* (“explaining”) about Palestine:

this technique embodies a public-private partnership which links information warfare with the strategic objectives of the Israeli state. Multifaceted and tailored to the digital age, it is deeply aware that perception shapes reality. While rooted in earlier concepts of agitprop and censorship, *hasbara* does not look to jam the supply of contradictory information to audiences. Instead, it willingly accepts an open marketplace of opinion. What it seeks to do in this context is to promote selective listening by limiting the receptivity of audiences to information, rather than constricting its flow...

It is unsurprising then that Assadism has successfully incorporated the *hasbara* playbook into its arsenal. In a tragic twist, many voices that are acquainted with Israeli deflection and denialism on Palestine likewise emit a deafening silence towards the Assad’s counter-revolution against Syrians. Negation is couched in terms of ‘security’ and ‘counterterrorism’, lesser evil and Islamophobic rationalizations, while routinely leading to conspiratorial allegations in desperate attempts to exonerate a bloodstained rump state.<sup>30</sup>

The importance of the growth of Russian *personal* influence over long-term Left leaders must also be recognized. The Marxist Left was totally marginalized in the West from the collapse of the Warsaw Pact states in the late 1980s until the Iraq War/global financial crisis era, 15-20 years later. At the time, many saw it as positive that the Russian state wished to amplify anti-war voices. But a Russian supply of paid media gigs and being taken seriously has become an addictive drug, which many US and UK Leftists are now “hooked” on. Worse, this addiction has the side-effect that their critiques of US/EU imperialism are now increasingly indistinguishable from those of far-Rightists like Alex Jones, who is also promoted by Russian media. Casey Michel again:

<sup>29</sup> <https://pulsemedia.org/2018/04/29/you-arent-antiwar-if-you-arent-anti-assads-war/>

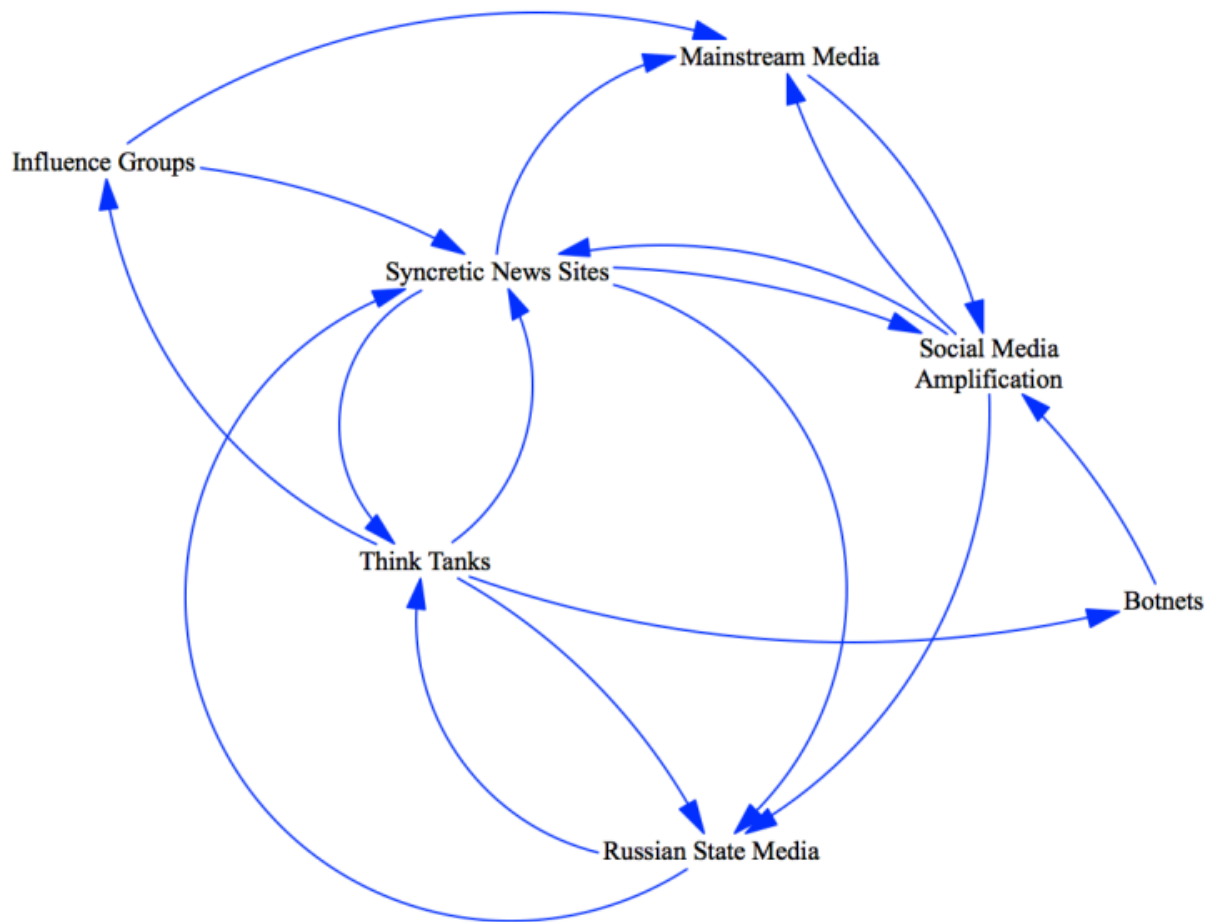
<sup>30</sup> <https://splinteredeye.wordpress.com/2018/02/28/the-permutations-of-assadism/>

Perhaps the starkest case in point is Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein and her constituency. In December 2015, the Kremlin feted Stein by inviting her to the gala celebrating the 10-year anniversary of Kremlin-funded propaganda network RT. Over a year later, it remains unclear who paid for Stein’s trip to Moscow and her accommodations there. Her campaign ignored multiple questions on this score. We do know, however, that Stein sat at the same table as both Putin and Lt. Gen. Mike Flynn, Trump’s soon-to-be national security adviser. She further spoke at an RT-sponsored panel, using her presence to criticize the U.S.’s “disastrous militarism.” Afterward, straddling Moscow’s Red Square, Stein described the panel as “inspiring,” going on to claim that Putin, whom she painted as a political novice, told her he “agree[d]” with her “on many issues.”

Stein presents herself as a champion of the underclass and the environment, and an opponent of the surveillance state and corporate media, and yet she seemed to take pleasure in her marriage of true minds with a kleptocratic intelligence officer who levels forests and arrests or kills critical journalists and invades foreign countries. Their true commonality, of course, is that both Putin and Stein are dogged opponents of U.S. foreign policy.

It is important to understand that neither the Russian state, nor the Mercers or the Kochs, are particularly interested in supporting “fascism” any more than they really want to promote Green politics. They are interested in using sophisticated media strategies to build a populist bloc against liberalism and for the unfettered sovereignty of nation states. Russian media, in particular, encourages “anti-globalization, anti-imperialist” voices on the Left to the extent that they might turn Western audiences against interference with Russian foreign policy.

However, the answer is not as simple as “it was Russia wot did it”. Conspiracy theories about how mass movements and uprisings around the world are “CIA proxy wars” reveal an incorrect and chauvinistic assumption that nothing can happen unless some Great Power or other makes it happens. In this case, it’s important to point out that we wouldn’t have Brexit or President Trump if there weren’t a sizeable mass audience for xenophobic, reactionary ideas. It is the contention of this article that *the Left has failed in its historic mission by becoming part of the audience for one-sided anti-neoliberalism which aligns with fascist messaging.*



Alex Reid Ross's diagram of the interplay between the Russian propaganda apparatus and fascist or Red-Brown groups – from <https://humusforthought.com/2018/03/16/the-multipolar-spin-how-fascists-operationalize-left-wing-resentment/>

## Vector 2: actual Red-Brown networks

Another part of the puzzle is a real and growing network of, not groups or activists which are influenced by Red-Brown ideology, but *self-conscious* Red-Brown activists – that is, people who want to create an alliance or fusion between the radical Left and the nationalist/fascist Right. This growing network was exposed in an extremely long, but thorough and eye-opening pseudonymous blog post earlier this year entitled “An Investigation into Red-Brown Alliances”<sup>31, ii</sup> The author's introduction confirms our suspicion that Syria is “Ground Zero” of the outbreak of Red-Brown politics:

This long post started as an investigation about the Left and Syria which I started after I read the Sol Process blog's publication of three posts concerning shady pro-Assad sources used in leftist circles ... and which later expanded into a more extensive investigation as well as an internal leftist critique of the Left's present crisis from a radical leftist internationalist and anti-fascist perspective.

<sup>31</sup> <https://ravingsofaradicalvagabond.noblogs.org/post/2018/01/15/an-investigation-into-red-brown-alliances/>



The article deserves full reading, but a few points are worth excerpting here:

- It explains the tradition of “Third Position” politics (that is, a position that is anti-capitalist as well as anti-communist)—a fascism which includes socialist-sounding rhetoric and an alliance with Third World anti-colonialist movements such as those of Qadhafi, Robert Mugabe or Hezbollah in Lebanon. Crucially, some of these fascists actually ended up seeing the Soviet Union as the lesser evil – as French fascist intellectual Alain de Benoist said in 1982, “Better to wear the helmet of a Red Army soldier than to live on a diet of hamburgers in Brooklyn”. This should be a sober warning to anyone who thinks Soviet nostalgia is in itself a defence against fascist sympathies.
- It notes that fascists attempted to take over the West Berlin branch of the Green Party in 1980 – an event with ominous echoes for the current dominance of the Jill Stein / David Cobb tendency in the Green Party USA<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, the Greens’ 2008 presidential candidate, Cynthia McKinney, is also a long-standing purveyor of “Rothschild/Soros” conspiracy theories which are thinly veiled anti-Semitism<sup>33</sup>.
- It mentions the long-running Lyndon LaRouche movement, whose acolytes can be seen selling their leaders’ work on the streets of Melbourne. LaRouche began in American Trotskyism, then pulled his cultish following over to an embrace of the far-right; fresh from accusing Barack Obama of being a new Hitler, they now push a pro-Trump, pro-Putin line<sup>34</sup>
- It discusses the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), an honest-to-goodness old-school fascist party which is part of Bashar al-Assad’s governing coalition in Syria, and which was recently revealed to be funding prominent left-wing US Democrat Dennis Kucinich<sup>35</sup>.
- It describes several international “think-tanks”, websites and conferences against

neoliberal globalisation which are sponsored and supported by left-wing anti-war socialists, Right-wing and fascist conspiracy theorists, and those who have evolved into a strange blend of the two.

- It details strong ties between many of these *Querfront* activists and “Novorossiia”, the separatist states in the east of Ukraine which are supported by Russia. (Jill Stein’s repeated defence of Russian-speaking separatists in Ukraine on the grounds that “Ukraine used to be part of Russia” raised eyebrows in the 2016 election<sup>36</sup>).

If you can make it all the way through this extremely long article, you will be left in no doubt that fascism is a chameleon which is able to insinuate its way into socialist, green, anti-colonialist and all other kinds of progressive movement to spread its message of ethnocentrism and authoritarianism – if not exposed for its true nature as soon as possible.

Anton Mukhamedov goes into more detail:

... the threat of red-brown convergence is looming large in the wake of Syria strikes, as the recent anti-war protests have reunited self-described leftists and those individuals whose careers revolve around attacking leftists and minorities.

The former British National Party leader Nick Griffin proclaiming conditional support for Jeremy Corbyn, in case the latter continued to impute Assad with the responsibility for the latest chemical attack in Douma, must be a cause for concern. Instead of taking a look at what in Labour leader’s platform might attract British nationalists, some leftists claimed that Griffin simply “saw the light”.

Even more alarming, the Neo-Nazi blogger Tim Gionet, known as “Baked Alaska”, who previously attended the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, appeared alongside Los Angeles ANSWER coalition at a march featuring Syrian regime flags. Several Stop the War marches were also inundated with images celebrating Bashar al-Assad and Vladimir Putin.

Rather than “seeing the light”, the reactionaries infiltrating left-wing spaces are instead

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/07/13/on-caitlin-johnstone-and-david-cobbs-attempt-to-destroy-the-green-party/>

<sup>33</sup> <http://adamholland.blogspot.co.nz/2009/04/cynthia-mckinney-and-far-right-red.html>

<sup>34</sup> <https://greenwichfreepress.com/news/government/in-cos-cob-post-larouche-pac-activists-warn-all-who-listen-of-coup-against-trump-104264/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.snopes.com/news/2018/04/26/kucinichs-as-sad-criticized-ohio-governors-race/>

<sup>36</sup> See for example <https://www.vox.com/2016/9/14/12913174/jill-stein-green-party>

remaining loyal to their positions and attempting to subvert movements deeming themselves progressive in favour of a pseudo anti-imperialist and reactionary approach to geopolitics, which lacks any concern for civilians and promotes, under the guise of secular anti-imperialism, a ruthless and sectarian dictator who has executed thousands and continues to commit crimes against humanity....

A month ago, a piece published by the Southern Poverty Law Center depicted a political scene ripe for barely hidden collaborations between the far right and a fraction of the Western left, such as the American ANSWER coalition or Party for Socialism and Liberation embracing similar foreign policy talking points as white nationalists. The author described a surprising connection over Syria, mediated by movements such as the Hands Off Syria coalition and think-tanks (inspired by a Russian fascist ideology going by the name of “Eurasianism”), all sharing the same affinity for Russian military intervention in Syria. Soon enough, the piece—written by Portland State University lecturer and fascism expert Alexander Reid Ross—was retracted due to a litigation threat issued by one of the actors mentioned in the article [Max Blumenthal – DL].

Some other prominent Western voices calling for a *Querfront* between the radical Left and the Trumpist/nationalist Right against neoliberal globalism include Cassandra Fairbanks, a social media anti-police activist who publicly switched allegiance from Bernie Sanders to Trump<sup>37</sup>. Australian blogger Caitlin Johnstone has become something of a celebrity for her calls for the Left to collaborate with the Trumpist right against “the establishment” (i.e. neoliberal globalism):

“We lefties need to attack the establishment at every turn and circulate awareness of what’s really happening in the world, and when this means collaborating with the right wing, we should do it ... Cernovich and I probably disagree on more things than we agree on ideologically, but where we do agree it’s absolutely stupid for us not to work together”<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.telesur.tv/english/opinion/Why-This-Sanders-Supporter-is-Boarding-the-Trump-Train-20160713-0018.html>

<sup>38</sup> Quoted at <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/07/13/on-caitlin-johnstone-and-david-cobbs-attempt-to-destroy-the-green-party/>

Michael Cernovich, for those who don’t know, is an alt-right blogger and one of the main promoters of the “Pizzagate” hoax, a baseless conspiracy theory about Hillary Clinton and other high-ranking Democrats being part of a child-trafficking ring<sup>39</sup>. Johnstone’s other claim to fame has been repeated articles claiming that the Trump-Russia collusion enquiry is an entirely bogus Clintonist scam. Johnstone now has the claim to fame of having been recommended by none other than British musician Roger Waters, formerly of Pink Floyd<sup>40</sup>. The latter, a long-standing leftist and pro-Palestine activist, has recently been repeating Syrian chemical warfare denial and Russian-sourced conspiracy theory live on stage (something which is probably not unrelated, again, to the platform he has been given for his political views by the RT network).

Alexandr Dugin was briefly mentioned above, but American geopolitical analyst Eric Draitser explains his central role in modern Red Brown politics in another excellent article which deserves quoting at length:

Dugin is widely regarded as very influential in Russian policy circles – his *Foundations of Geopolitics* remains a required text for Russian military officers ....

One of Dugin’s most important works is *The Fourth Political Theory (4PT)*, a pseudo-intellectual manifesto of fascist politics that eschews 20<sup>th</sup> Century political labels in favor of a “new synthesis” for a new century.... The essence of 4PT is just a repackaged variant of third positionism from an openly fascist perspective. It calls for direct alignment and alliance of forces on the far left and far right to attack the center. Even the homepage for the book states “Beyond left and right but against the center.” Sound familiar?

...his 21<sup>st</sup> Century 4PT politics is rooted in the idea of a necessary collaboration between a bygone left (communists, socialists, etc.) and a bygone right (fascists). Put another way, Dugin here is rebranding fascism as something distinctly new, separated from the tarnished historical legacy of Nazism and Italian fascism, something most necessary in our “post-modern” world. Of course, it should be noted that when Dugin says “post-modern” he means multiculturalism,

---

<sup>39</sup> <https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Pizzagate>

<sup>40</sup> <https://twitter.com/charliearchy/status/986321775293181952>

gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, environmentalism, anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and generally everything that has become fundamental to the Left over the last 50 years.<sup>41</sup>

... this is precisely the Duginist strategy, to penetrate the left via anti-imperialism and marry it to the far right, with the two united in a common pro-Russian outlook. That's Dugin's agenda, and people like [Caitlin] Johnstone become very useful to that end. Just looking at the number of alleged progressives who rightly reject US corporate media narratives unless they're backed by hard evidence, while at the same time believing reports from Russian media and Kremlin press releases as holy writ tells me that that strategy is somewhat effective.

## Germ 1: Political confusion and despair

I now wish to return to the question of the *agent* of the Red-Brown zombie plague, that is: what are the political weaknesses of the existing Left which led to them being drawn into this modern *Querfront*?

Part of the answer is a *misrecognition* of the situation. Red-brown politics is sometimes called "confusionism", as it relies on a consciously anti-fascist Left being *confused* about what a fascist or reactionary movement means in practice. As I said in the previous article, fascism acts like a *social parasite*, blending into its host to exploit it. The activist Left has spent the past 30-40 years fighting neoliberal globalism, which seeks to abolish not only any borders to capital and trade, but also the welfare state as we used to know it. As I said in "Against Conservative Leftism", this long-running defensive battle has meant that much of the Left cannot see a socialist horizon beyond a return to 1960s-style social democracy (hence, the giddy, uncritical support for popular proponents of such politics like Bernie Sanders or Jeremy Corbyn).

As to "fascism", the term has become loosely used to describe the authoritarian wing of neoliberalism – the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, or the Right-wing neoliberal success of the likes of Thatcher and Reagan. So when the smarter modern fascists emphasise their opposition to "free trade" and "globalism" and talk about "supporting sovereign states against foreign intervention", it is not surprising that many of the current activist-Left fail to recognize that these are our worst enemies. It's worth quoting from my "Against Conservative Leftism" on this issue: We do not argue that conservative leftism is the same as "red-brown" politics. What we argue is that *it offers no intellectual defence against it*. The argument

is that "red-brown" politics (and its cousin, outright fascism) have increasingly gotten a foothold in activist movements worldwide precisely because conservative leftism has no way of arguing against it. For example, conservative leftists in Aotearoa/New Zealand happily publish memes originating from far-right factions in the United States or Britain, because they have no way to tell the difference between radical and reactionary anti-globalisation.

On the international scale, red-browns and conservative leftists join together in cheerleading the Russian bombing of Syria and the strangling of its revolution in the name of "fighting Islamist terror", and the belief that Russian bombs are somehow better than American bombs. Similarly, conservative leftist Islamophobia (including, sadly, the Revolutionary Socialists of Egypt) supported General al-Sisi's military coup against the democratically elected Islamist-backed Morsi government in Egypt in 2012. (*WiCL*, pp. 18-19)

Another possible factor in the Leftist embrace of geopolitics as a guiding principle is despair at the impotence of actually-existing working-class or revolutionary forces, and thus a vicarious identification with any force which seems capable of offering any kind of an alternative to neoliberal globalisation. Moishe Postone described a similar phenomenon of a previous generation of activists:

the new glorification of violence of the late 1960s was caused by a severe frustration of the faculty of action in the modern world. That is, it expressed an underlying despair with regard to the real efficacy of political will, of political agency. In a historical situation of heightened helplessness, violence both expressed the rage of helplessness and helped suppress such feelings of helplessness. It became an act of self-constitution as outsider, as other, rather than an instrument of transformation...

The notion of resistance, however, says little about the nature of that which is being resisted or of the politics of the resistance involved – that is, the character of determinate forms of critique, opposition, rebellion, and "revolution." The notion of resistance frequently expresses a deeply dualistic worldview that tends to reify both the system of domination and the idea of agency.<sup>42</sup>

This quote – written before the invasion of Iraq – seems to perfectly describe the current period,

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/07/28/enough-non-sense-the-left-does-not-collaborate-with-fascists/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://libcom.org/library/history-hopelessness>



where the religious totalitarian leaders of Iran describe their support for the secular totalitarian dictatorship in Syria as part of an “Axis of Resistance”<sup>43</sup> – and many Western activists and writers on the Left are prepared to take this self-description of oppressive regimes seriously, as if Assad or the Iranian mullahs spoke for their people rather than exploiting and victimising them.

A third factor is perhaps the simplest – the tiny size of the activist Left, and its isolation from the communities it theoretically speaks on behalf of, leads not only to the pressures of “groupthink” (an unwillingness to stand apart from majority opinion), but of a kind of “nihilism” where the most popular narratives are those which tell the community what it wants to hear, accuracy or even truth be damned. This is, of course, a miniature version of the business model of FOX News. American journalist Charles Davis comments:

Little white lies don’t serve grand ends when the means are perceived as an expression of one’s true politics. When delivered with smug flair, they do keep those who aren’t alienated in high spirits, however, and the clicks on news that is fake, left media criticism teaches us, always exceed clicks on the (enemy) analysis that corrects. That ensures a steady stream of digital red meat, misleading content and algorithmic takes garnering more donations to the Patreon in the bio and so on and so forth until we all log off for the very last time.<sup>44</sup>

This brings to mind Jodi Dean’s comment in *Crowds and Party* that, in the fragmented Left social-media scene of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the ostracism and persecution of dissenting views and the willingness to put ideology in front of the facts are sometimes *worse* than the obedience within a monolithic old-style Stalinist party (p. 219)<sup>45</sup>.

A final factor may be an “optimistic” appetite to paint any popular groundswell against the neoliberal centre as being progressive in origin; from this point of view, to suggest that racist, misogynist or even fascist ideas might be *popular* with (particularly white) voters is interpreted as an unacceptable slander against the working class. This can probably most justly be put in the category of “wishful thinking”.

---

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-were-in-axis-of-resistance-with-syria/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://freecharlesdavis.com/2017/09/23/the-truth-isnt-useful/>

<sup>45</sup> See my review at <https://fightback.org.nz/2016/05/25/mind-the-gap-jodi-deans-crowds-and-party-review/>

## Germ 2: “Proletarian nations” – the ML/fascist convergence

Some argue that the real problem is the influence of “Stalinist”, “Marxist-Leninist” or “tankie” politics – that is, nostalgia for the Soviet Union and defence of contemporary states such as North Korea, Cuba and sometimes even China. Obviously, historically the Stalinised Communist Parties of the West had heavy influence on social democratic and liberal opinion, pulling them towards at least a “lesser-evil” position on such states. English socialist Ben Watson writes concerning British left politics during the Cold War:

The idea that Russian state capitalism was qualitatively different from Western capitalism led to an abstract politics that passed over the atrocities of Russian military imperialism and its atom bomb; in Britain, it encouraged a reformism that abandoned class struggle in favour of Labour Party electoralism and the promises of nationalisation (*Art, Class and Cleavage*, p. 67)

The parallels to the “revolutionary socialists” who have become uncritical supporters of Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership of the Labour Party should be obvious. But how does this politics have any relevance to the Russia/Syria situation? Russia is clearly now a capitalist state, run by a right-wing strongman with extremely strong ties to billionaire oligarchs and organised crime, whose only link to the state founded built by Joseph Stalin is nostalgia for super-power status. In Syria, it’s true that Hafez al-Assad nationalised a lot of the Syrian economy, but then he started privatising it again in the 1990s, and his son Bashar has followed suit<sup>46</sup>. What could be persuading Marxist-Leninists – who did not support authoritarian nationalist regimes such as Assad’s in the 1980s – to do so now? And what about the influence on – for example – the British SWP and splits from it such as Counterfire, who once proudly declared “Neither Washington Nor Moscow” in the Cold War and refused to defend any authoritarian regime?

A recent article by a US activist group calling itself the “Left Wind Collective” suggests that it’s not as simple as blaming “Stalinism”<sup>47</sup>. They identify two groups as the backbone of what is called “ML” politics in the United States today:

- Groups tracing their heritage back to the “New Communist Movement” of the 1970s, who were more or less critical supporters of

---

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.net/en/content/socio-economic-roots-syria%E2%80%99s-uprising>

<sup>47</sup> <https://theleftwind.wordpress.com/2018/03/02/the-sect-system/>

Mao Zedong in China (such as Bob Avakian's Revolutionary Communist Party);

- Groups tracing their heritage back to Sam Marcy, who led a split from the Trotskyist US Socialist Workers' Party, over the US-SWP's opposition to the Russian invasion of Hungary. The "Marcyists" later formed the Workers' World Party (WWP) from which later split the Party of Socialism and Liberty (PSL). It is crucial to note that WWP and PSL activists are extremely central to anti-war politics in the United States (through the coalition ANSWER); and have been the most forthright with a pro-Assad, pro-Russia position on the Syrian conflict.

The fact that one of the US's major "Marxist-Leninist" trends in fact comes from the Trotskyist position complicates the idea that the issue here is the same as 1980s and 1990s style sectarian struggles. In fact, what holds the two factions – which we might call "post-Mao" and "Marcyist" trends – together is *the very attitude to imperialism which we examined above*. Writing in 1966, British socialist Nigel Harris describes Soviet geopolitics under Stalin as follows:

What class struggle remained prominent was transferred from the domestic to the international scene where it became identified with a nationalist struggle. Class was then attributed to groups or individuals according to their international position, or, more specifically, their attitude to the Soviet Union... Ultimately, the struggle was said to take place between 'proletarian nations' and 'bourgeois nations' which, in practice, signified nothing about those countries' domestic class structure for 'proletarian' meant only poor, predominantly peasant (not at all 'proletarian') countries driven explicitly by nationalistic revulsion from imperial exploitation, and 'bourgeois' meant only anti-Soviet rich countries...

Li Dazhao [an early Chinese communist who died in 1927] who was similarly disinterested in the dynamic role of domestic Chinese classes, placing complete emphasis on the anti-foreigner, anti-imperialist struggle; he also identified China as a whole as a 'proletarian nation' and the white races as the world ruling class.<sup>48</sup>

Accordingly, the American RCP used the concept in 1973 to describe African-Americans as "a nation made up mainly of workers: a proletarian nation"<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/harris/1966/xx/marxism.htm>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/ru-reply-davidson.htm>

Compare this with Left Wind's description of the Marcyist concept of "Global Class War":

In this formulation, the world is increasingly polarized into two "class camps": one of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the other of the global working class, the socialist countries, and the national liberation movements.

Thus, Sam Marcy, coming from a Trotskyist position that Stalin's repressive bureaucratic leadership had betrayed the Revolution, ended up supporting Russian tanks crushing the workers' uprising in Hungary in 1956. The strength of the Soviet-led military bloc was *more important* than the class struggle of Hungarian workers against their local Communist Party bureaucracy. It only remains to add that the idea of a "proletarian nation"<sup>50</sup> struggling against "bourgeois" ones was also embraced by Fascist movements. It actually originated in the writing of Italian nationalist Enrico Corradini<sup>51</sup> and was later adopted by Mussolini himself, to argue that Italian imperialism in North Africa was justified and morally superior to the imperialism of the "Plutocratic Nations" such as Britain or France.

I believe that this idea of "proletarian and bourgeois nations" – subordinating or even eliminating the class struggle or democratic movements *within* countries - is *the essential programmatic agreement between Fascists and "tankies"*<sup>1</sup>. The arguments used by the Italian "proletarian nationalists" about their country are mimicked by those on both Left and Right who bemoan the historical "humiliation" (i.e. fall from superpower status) of Russia, to defend its right to intervene in Ukraine and Syria and to annex Crimea. The difference between "Left" and "Right" versions of this narrative would be the difference between describing Russia as an "exploited, non-imperialist" or even "proletarian" nation, standing strong against US / Western European hegemony, and describing Russia as the embodiment of Christian traditionalism, standing strong against both Islam and secular globalism. They both end up in the same place.

This analysis of the standard "anti-imperialist" argument as "Red-brown" – in the precise sense as being indistinguishable from a Fascist argument based on the rights of national sovereignty – is echoed by many others on the Left. As if to confirm this analysis, the "Investigation into Red-Brown Alliances" blog post quoted above documents the WWP's alliances with explicitly Red-Brown parties in the former Soviet Union, such as the Russian Communist Workers' Party or Borotba in Ukraine<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proletarian\\_nation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proletarian_nation)

<sup>51</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrico\\_Corradini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrico_Corradini)

<sup>52</sup> <https://ravingsofaradicalvagabond.noblogs.org/post/2018/01/15/an-investigation-into-red-brown-alliances/>

In the words of one Twitter critic:

most of what passes for leftist “anti-war” reasoning today resembles what had been a rightist critique of hegemony and unwittingly carries on the forgotten tradition of fascist anti-imperialism<sup>53</sup>

And another:

When ML Twitter talks about imperialism, it sounds less like structural analysis of imperialism based on Marxist-Leninist theory and more like they copied the script of the folks who believe there are ‘globalist’ conspiracies everywhere<sup>54</sup>

If this were confined only to self-described “Marxist-Leninists” – or to Twitter – it would be a curiosity of interest only to students of the Left-wing sub-culture. But as I explained in a previous section, this “common sense” idea of imperialism as being identical to “US-EU hegemony” is replicated by mainstream Left voices, and increasingly, by the leadership of the British Labour Party in which so many Leftists have placed their hopes. This is the real problem.

### Germ 3: Islamophobia and West-centrism

Veteran US Marxist Louis Proyect suggests, at least as far as Syria and Libya are concerned, that another factor involves:

...deep-seated Islamophobia that is rooted in 9/11. Back then, Christopher Hitchens earned the contempt for most of us on the left for his close ties to the Bush administration. Even if it was becoming obvious that the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq was based on a mountain of lies, Hitchens gave the Bush administration a free pass because he saw al-Qaeda as the greatest threat to “Western Civilization” since Adolph Hitler.

Today, there is a virtual army of journalists who combine the shoddy journalism of Judith Miller and the virulent Islamophobia of Christopher Hitchens on behalf of a new crusade against the “Salafist menace”. But instead of serving as the lapdog of George W. Bush, they operate as cogs in the propaganda machine for the Kremlin and the Baathist [Syrian] state. Their hatred for “jihadism” runs so deep that they justify the bomb-

ing of hospitals in Idlib because [the former Syrian affiliate of al-Qaeda] has a foothold there. The ability of many leftists to lament the war crimes in Yemen and now in Afrin while cheering on Russian and Syrian mass murder is a defect in the kind of movement we have become, showing the same kind of cynical “ends justify the means” mindset that destroyed the Stalinized Communist Party.<sup>55</sup>

In the Iraq War period, the Left completely rejected “War on Terror” rhetoric when it came from George W. Bush and Tony Blair in 2003. We rejected the idea that bombs, occupation and invasion were the correct response to small networks of Islamist nihilists who had adopted the tactic of attacks against Western civilian populations. However, when very similar rhetoric comes from Vladimir Putin concerning Syria (and, for that matter, Chechnya), much of the Left is happy to accept it – even to the barbaric point where even chlorine gas bombing against civilian targets can be accepted if those civilians can be made out to be “Islamists” or “Salafists”.

The Left-Islamophobic undercurrent of this pointed out by Australian academic Ghassan Hage:

An Assadist is someone who believes in the ‘dictatorship of the seculariat’. They think that the ‘secular’ bit in the concept of ‘secular dictatorship’ far outweighs in importance the ‘dictatorship’ bit.<sup>56</sup>

The history of the relationship between socialist and Islamist currents is a long and complicated one which this article cannot go into in detail<sup>57</sup>. This history is a deeply contradictory one, but an adequate rule of thumb would be to say that – much like political activism motivated by Christianity – “Islamism” may take on democratic *or* authoritarian, progressive *or* reactionary forms. To instinctively take the side of “the secularists” in any such conflict is a gross form of Orientalism which excuses Western leftists from actually understanding struggles in a non-Western society. Scottish-Egyptian journalist Sam Charles Hamad sums it up thus:

The fundamental point is not that we skate over the parts of the politics of ostensibly Islamist or Islamist-rooted forces that we disagree with, but to recognise that in liberation struggles

<sup>55</sup> <https://louisproyect.org/2018/02/05/fact-checking-the-lat-est-propaganda-rolling-off-the-assadist-assembly-line/>

<sup>56</sup> <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2016/08/24/how-do-you-recognise-an-assadist/>

<sup>57</sup> One slightly outdated attempt from 1994 may be useful to some readers: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/harman/1994/xx/islam.htm>

<sup>53</sup> [https://twitter.com/\\_adn/status/984143058387206144](https://twitter.com/_adn/status/984143058387206144)

<sup>54</sup> <https://twitter.com/4kshatra/status/988801806984712192>



against secular tyrannies or oppressors, Islamism is a major expression of the opposition to this whether we like it or not, with a popular base rooted in the same demands for liberty that shape these revolutions themselves. This is as true in Syria and Egypt as it is in Palestine.

In fact, one of the great ironies of the reaction of the left to the Syrian revolution is the contrast in the way it relates to the Palestinian struggle. While the fact that the only active resistance groups to Israel are all Islamist, with the largest, Hamas, being Ikhwani Islamists, committed initially to Islamic democracy but forced to suspend democracy after almost immediately being attacked by Fatah, backed by Israel, the US and UK. Then you have the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, originally set up as the Palestinian branch of the Salafist Egyptian Islamic Jihad, but now much more akin to Hamas in terms of ideology – Islamism intertwined with Palestinian nationalism.<sup>58</sup>

To some degree, this Islamophobia is a disguised form of Ayoub's "essentialist anti-imperialism" as described above— the Western Left putting its parochial concerns and priorities over the needs and the experience of foreign people who don't speak our language. As one Twitter commentator noted: "By centering all conflicts around the West, these "activists" strip second and third world (particularly brown folks) of all moral agency."<sup>59</sup> Robin Yassin-Kassab agrees:

This habit of thought – whereby the real torments of far away people are dwarfed in significance and impact by the imaginary machinations of the only state that matters, the American one – is depressingly common...Strange and part-way racist, as if white people's words enter the cosmic fabric so inevitably to determine brown people's history for years to come. The writings, protests and battles of Syrians mean nothing in comparison.<sup>60</sup>

As does his co-writer, Leila al-Shami:

This pro-fascist left seems blind to any form of imperialism that is non-western in origin. It combines identity politics with egoism. Everything that happens is viewed through the prism of what it means for westerners – only white men

have the power to make history.<sup>61</sup>

We therefore have a combination of Islamophobia with "alt-imperialism" and extremely one-sided anti-neoliberalism. For Trump's US forces to carpet-bomb "Islamic State" targets with Russian backing is seen as no big deal, whereas Obama and Clinton's miserly support for Syria's democratic movements (some of whom might have been Islamists) was seen as a provocation to nuclear war. This is the point where the fascist and near-fascist Right finds unity with much of the existing Left, whether of Marxist, social-democratic or anarchist background.

## What is to be done?

Robin Yassin-Kassab, whom we have repeatedly quoted, gives his own suggestion in a recent blog post:

If people who consider themselves leftists want to have any positive influence whatsoever in the future, they need to drive genocide deniers (and the conspiracy theory mindset which replaces facts with convenient myths, analysis with demonology, and human compassion with racism) out of their movement completely.

The failure to distinguish between truth and lies is a prerequisite for fascism. Just as Stalin and Hitler had their shills, so today British priests, ... journalists like Fisk, and rightist and leftist conspiracy theorists are busy parroting victim-blaming fascist narratives.

I think most people (not just leftists) think my position is too extreme. If that's you, well, let's wait for the coming years and decades and see. Syrians are targeted by these lies today, Bosnian Muslims yesterday. In the future it could be any other group, including 'leftists' and even priests. Once you accept the notion that 'the narrative' is sexier than the reality, you don't get to choose which narratives gain most traction.<sup>62</sup>

From a revolutionary Marxist point of view, of course, the idea of "driving out" people who're expressing Assadist or other red-brown ideas from our already tiny, beleaguered and isolated movement is extremely hard to swallow. Some critics have

<sup>58</sup> <https://herecomesthetumbleweed.wordpress.com/2015/08/02/anti-anti-imperialism/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://twitter.com/JoshYaz/status/988111089249411072>

<sup>60</sup> <https://qunfuz.com/2016/08/09/inland-american-conspiracies/>

<sup>61</sup> <https://leilashami.wordpress.com/2018/04/14/the-anti-imperialism-of-idiots/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://qunfuz.com/2018/04/22/genocide-denial/>

even accused *Fightback* of reviving the old Stalinist “social fascism” hypothesis (see article in this issue) – with Western Assadists, in this metaphor, being driven out of the movement by unjust accusations of fascism. This reminds us of nothing else than Donald Trump calling the continuing investigation into his links with Russia a “witch hunt”. It’s only a witch-hunt if *there are no witches*. As I suggested above, the great weakness of the contemporary activist Left is defined by its drawing a simplistic boundary around “opposition to neoliberal globalisation”. Without further precision, that *includes* fascists. Perhaps in the 1920s and 1930s, some might have been excused for not understanding the consequences of accepting ethno-nationalists, whose contempt for democracy and social equality is barely disguised, as allies of socialism. There can be no such excuse today.

Another variation of this argument has been expressed to us as “why is Syria the hill you’re willing to die on? Isn’t this cranky and sectarian?” As I hope we have explained in this article, Syria is not so much as a “hill” as the *tip of the iceberg* of a whole series of ideas pointing towards a Fascist view of the world. In the famous metaphor of Leon Trotsky, a scratch may develop into gangrene if the necessary medical attention is not given. A contradiction between working-class solidarity when it comes to local politics, and support for oppressive State brutality overseas (even denialism of the worst acts of such brutality) must be resolved in one direction or another sooner or later. Ignoring when a comrade is expressing ideas which put them in the camp of global reaction is not only not comradely, it is criminally irresponsible in an era when the Right is on the rise – putting our friendships and working relationships ahead of calling out horrible politics when we see them is, to coin a phrase, how Trump got elected.

Canadian socialist “Lucy Antigone” gave testimony of the dangers of blurring between Leftist and nationalist-Right discourse in a recent Facebook comment:

Honestly it’s alarming the extent to which conservatives, conspiracy theorists, prominent leftists on my feed share the same articles, premises, slogans. And more so that this is done it seems unwittingly by the left, more tactically on the right, so that we now have a Trumpist-Conservative running in a high-profile provincial election on the Corbynist platform of “For the many, not the few,” and no one bats an eye at the mention of the Rothschilds vis western imperialism and Syria. Okay, not \*no one\* - but almost that many.

Further, for the accusation of “sectarianism” to stick, it must be expanded to mean any political debate within the Left. *Fightback* makes no excuse for our platform of no platform for fascism, and no tolerance for Red-Brown convergence of ideas. We will confront these ideas where-ever they are raised, and whoever raises them – even if the person raising them is a popular activist with an admirable track record of struggle. Of course, most activists on the Left who hold these ideas are not consciously fascists. If they were, we would not bother debating them – we should shun and isolate them, as we do to all fascists.

We take Robin Yassin-Kassab seriously when he says that a Western left that fails to stand in solidarity with all the oppressed of the world (because of a Red-Brown notion of “geopolitics”) has no hope at all of being part of a global revolution. *Fightback’s* strategy is to form a *pole of opposition* against these ideas where-ever they appear on the Aotearoa or Australian left. We are aware of other comrades in Britain, the United States and elsewhere who are waging a similar struggle on the Left. We also stand in solidarity for everyone who stands up for the oppressed and murdered in Syria, who are mostly not socialist Leftists themselves – and why would they be, given what they’ve seen from the socialist Left on this issue?

The bottom lines for such a global realignment of the Left that we suggest are:

- **Popular internationalism;** solidarity with *all* exploited and oppressed people, globally; solidarity directed towards peoples in struggle, not towards nation-states or their governments.
- **Cognitive openness:** the old slogan of “scientific socialism” in this era cannot mean the dogmatic, mechanistic schemas of the past, but on the contrary a socialist/working-class movement which embraces the cutting-edge of scientific thought and theory, no matter its source; this against the “echo chamber” mentality when only voices who are already “within our movement” are heard or, even worse, only those which agree with our prejudices. Remember what a cunning mimic fascism is.
- **A radical, sustainable, forward-looking programme for social equality;** nostalgia and traditionalism are debilitating illnesses for those who really wish to change the future.

We encourage all who feel the same way to join *Fightback* or to support our publications and our work, and either way to get in touch.



---

## References without hyperlinks

Dean, Jodi. *Crowds and Party*. London: Verso, 2016. Available at <https://www.amazon.com/Crowds-Party-Jodi-Dean/dp/1781686947>

Watson, Ben. *Art, Class and Cleavage: Quantulumcunque concerning Materialist Esthetix*. London: Quartet, 1998. Available at <https://www.amazon.com/Art-Class-Cleavage-Quantulumcunque-Materialistic/dp/0704380668>


## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> “Salafist” or “Salafi” means a “fundamentalist” Muslim who wishes to return Islam to the practices of Prophet Muhammad and his Companions (salaf). However, in popular articles about the Middle East it is used generally a “snarl word”, meaning any devout Sunni Muslim of whom the author does not approve. Michael Muhammad Knight’s *Why I Am A Salafi* (2014) is a good introduction to these issues: see a review at <https://en.qantara.de/content/book-review-why-i-am-a-salafi-by-michael-muhammad-knight-an-in-depth-exploration-of-islam>

<sup>ii</sup> An excellent news source on Red-Brown and Querfront activities was the Ukraine-based blog Reft or Light (<http://reftlight.euromaidanpress.com/>), which reprinted some of Fightback’s previous articles on this theme. Sadly, it does not seem to be updated any more.

<sup>iii</sup> Note here that I wish to use “tankie” in its correct historical sense – not to describe all Marxist-Leninists or Stalinists, but precisely those who justify and support imperialist attacks by those nations seen as opposed to the West. A “tankie” would mean one who supported the Russian tanks rolling into Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan – and now their bombs levelling most of Syria – while decrying all Western imperialist interventions. These are the people who can argue with a straight face that “Russia was invited into Syria”, while somehow not thinking the US presence in Vietnam was a good thing even though it was requested by the Saigon government of the time.





# When communists thought centrists were as bad as fascists...

This extract from an article by Florian Wilde in *International Socialism* journal<sup>1</sup> explains the disastrous theory of “social fascism” which disoriented the German Left and helped the Nazi rise to power. The parallels to those sections of the Left who, for example, refused to take a side between Clinton and Trump should be clear.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://isj.org.uk/divided-they-fell-the-german-left-and-the-rise-of-hitler/>

<sup>2</sup> A longer treatment of the subject is contained in Theodore Draper’s article from 1969: <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-ghost-of-social-fascism/>

The Communist Party of Germany [KPD] emerged out of the radical left wing of the Social Democratic Party [SPD] in response to the said party’s support for German involvement in the First World War. By the early 1920s the KPD had become a mass party characterised by a high degree of internal democracy and freedom of discussion; different currents competed for influence within the party.

One of the central controversies between these currents was how to relate to the Social Democrats, the party responsible for the deaths of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and hundreds of revolutionary workers: should they struggle head-on against them, as the “left” Communists demanded? Or should the party initiate united fronts with them against the capitalists? The united front was predicated upon the idea that the mass of Social Democrats’ interests diverged from those of their leadership. Even if one detested the SPD, they were still the largest political party of the working class and it was vital to prove to the membership that their leadership was not prepared to fight for them. The initiation of united fronts would bring SPD and KPD members together in common struggle, allowing the radicalising dynamic of mass movements to push Social Democrats to the left and into the arms of the Communists. This strategy was designed to win a majority of the working class over to the

Communist Party—a necessary prerequisite for a successful workers’ revolution.

The Communist Party organisation began to change fundamentally in the mid-1920s. Concomitant with the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, Stalinisation of the KPD began under the leadership of Ernst Thälmann. Freedom of discussion and internal democracy were replaced piece by piece by a mood of unquestioning discipline and authoritarian leadership. Oppositional currents were discouraged from speaking openly and eventually forced out of the party. No longer held politically accountable to the membership, in 1929 Thälmann and Stalin agreed upon an ultra-left course against the SPD, concluding that the Social Democrats represented a form of “social fascism”. This disastrous line would eventually prove fatal for both the Social Democrats and the Communists.

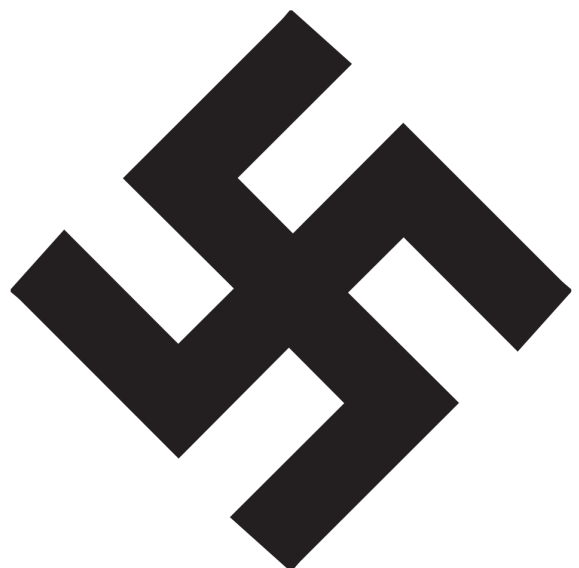
The theory of social fascism dictated that Nazis and Social Democrats were essentially two sides of the same coin. The primary enemy of the Communists was supposedly the Social Democrats, who protected capitalism from a workers’ revolution by deceiving the class with pseudo-socialist rhetoric. The worst of them all were the left wing Social Democrats, whose rhetoric was particularly deceptive. According to the theory, it was impossible to fight side by side with the SPD against the Nazis under such conditions. Indeed, the KPD declared that

defeating the social fascists was the “prerequisite to smashing fascism”. By 1932 the KPD began engaging in isolated attempts to initiate broader anti-fascist fronts, most importantly the Antifascistische Aktion, but these were formulated as “united fronts from below”—i.e. without the leadership of the SPD. Turning the logic of the united front on its head, SPD supporters were expected to give up their party allegiance before joining, as opposed to the united front being a first practical step towards the Communist Party. Throughout this period the leaderships of both the SPD and the KPD never came to a formal agreement regarding the fight against Nazism.

Another fatal consequence of the KPD’s ultra-leftism was that the term “fascism” was used irresponsibly to describe any and all opponents to the right of the party. The SPD-led government that ruled Germany until 1930 was considered “social fascist”. When Brüning formed a new right-wing government by decree without a parliamentary majority in 1930, the KPD declared that fascism had taken power. This went hand in hand with a deadly underestimation of the Nazi danger. Thus Thälmann could declare in 1932: “Nothing could be more fatal for us than to opportunistically overestimate the danger posed by Hitler-fascism”. The KPD’s seeming inability to distinguish between democratic, authoritarian and fascist expressions of capitalist rule proved to be its undoing. An organisation that continually vilified bourgeois democratic governments as fascist was unable to understand the true meaning of Hitler’s ascension to power on 30 January 1933, the day the KPD infamously (and ominously) declared: “After Hitler, we will take over!”

The KPD was never able to unleash the German proletariat’s revolutionary potential or fundamentally challenge the capitalist system. Its confrontational stance towards the SPD prevented a united struggle against the Nazis as well as the austerity imposed by the capitalist parties. The KPD’s strategy also prevented the development of a realistic socialist perspective that could have pulled many of the Nazis’ unemployed and petty bourgeois supporters back towards the labour movement.

It should be noted that despite employing a strategy that prevented an effective, united struggle, the Communists were at the same time those who fought the Nazis the hardest: hundreds of Communists fought in the civil-war-like street battles that became a common sight in Germany from 1929 to 1933, costing the lives of a hundred Nazis and even more KPD members. After Hitler’s ascension to power no group resisted harder or paid as high a price in blood as the KPD. Nearly every third KPD member went to prison under Nazi rule and thousands were murdered.



# The Rothschild Meme



One of the most popular memes circulated amongst anticapitalists on the internet purports to describe the power and influence of a single banking family - the Rothschilds. Many people circulate material on this meme without understanding its toxic Nazi origins or its fallacious character. British anti-fascist **Dave Parks** has provided useful notes on the background to this troubling Judeophobic trope (originally published on the *Vacillating Element* blog<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> <https://loucheleft.wordpress.com/2017/02/25/the-rothschild-thing/>:



The Rothschild family became big in banking in the eighteenth century. As is the case today, governments when short of funds will borrow money off the big banks. It is alleged that one of the Rothschild banks almost pay-rolled the British operation during the Napoleonic wars. Bear in mind the World bank and the IMF and other such institutions did not exist 200 years ago. The Rothschild family *were* one of the richest families in the world at points during the early nineteenth century.

During the eighteenth century (especially late in the century) there was a rise in craft Guilds (proto trade unions) and various societies and clubs used mostly by bourgeois types. In this context most famously the Illuminati group in Bavaria and the Freemasons across Europe. The Illuminati was very short lived (despite the claims of later conspiracy narratives) as it was closed down for being subversive – it did engage in spreading some socially progressive ideas (at a time when Republicanism and the idea of democracy was radical).

For right wing commentators the French Revolution could not have possibly been a consequence of the masses rising up and overthrowing the old regime – it must have been masterminded by evil secret cabals long in advance. The age of the Conspiracy Theory was born with narratives that had the Freemasons and/or the Illuminati behind it all. Of course, the rise in a powerful independent capitalist class which had conflicting interests to the old aristocracy had nothing to do with events, and the workers and peasants were reduced in such narratives to pawns on a chessboard with an evil guiding hand. In place of class and class struggle as an explanation of revolutionary events we have the rise of the narrative of the secret cabal.

With the industrial revolution and the growth of the working class there are new class conflicts in society with revolutionary events such as the 1848 uprisings. Again, in the conspiracy narrative – the workers are just the unruly masses who are the pawns in the hands of the cabals. The super-rich bankers such as the Rothschilds become part of this narrative. Along with revolutionary moods there are also counter-revolutionary ideas and events. In particular in Russia the Czar's secret police were actively engaged in whipping up anti-Semitism and encouraging pogroms against the Jews. This was taken as far as forging documents 'proving' the World Jewish Conspiracy – the most notorious of which was the Protocols of the Elders of Zion which claimed to be the minutes of a secret meeting of Jewish leaders to control the world through wars and revolutions.

Getting into the twentieth century the Rothschild empire was already eclipsed by the rise of modern banking. The original super-rich members of the family were long dead and their wealth spread

amongst large numbers of children, grand-children, great-great-grandchildren and so on. Today – some of them are still in banking but they are an irrelevancy in the grand scheme of things (pun intended!). However, we now see the rise of fascist movements. Fascism required an "anti-capitalist" demagoguery to go alongside blaming foreigners especially Jews, and the Jewish World Conspiracy takes off with monstrous consequences, with the Rothschilds still at the centre of the Jewish banking narrative despite the fact that they are already essentially a thing of the past.

Moving on to modern times we have the various varieties of conspiracy theories which have flourished for decades. Some of these have a Left tinge but they are just the old narrative being recycled again. Finance capital for the Nazis was bad whilst industrial capital was all that was good. So today we still have some fixated on the Rothschilds and the Rockefellers – their real relevance in the world today is zero – but they conjure up the concept of the evil cabal of bankers who are part of the conspiracy controlling governments and running historic events such as wars and revolutions.

These narratives are not just wrong factually, they are reactionary because they let the capitalist class off the hook. It isn't capitalism that is wrong in these narratives – it is the sheer wickedness of some individuals. What is always missing from the conspiracy narrative is the concept that we as working-class people can be the master of our own destiny – this can never be the case for the conspiracy theory narrative as all movements and historic events are ultimately controlled by the cabals. We are reduced to the role of helpless pawns in the hands of the evil. On the last point it is interesting to note that conspiracy narratives are particularly popular amongst fundamentalist Christians.



# Race & Reaction in New Zealand 1880-1950: A Pre-History of the Far Right

---

By TYLER STUART

For the most part, New Zealand has missed the kinds of ultra-reactionary mass movements which typified fascist and otherwise hard-line nationalist politics during periods of crisis in various other countries. Classical fascist movements or contemporary populist chauvinism (such as, say, 'Powellism' in Britain or 'Hansonism' in Australia) has largely failed to attain the same kind of mass following. That said, New Zealand is far from free of reactionary politics as a whole, and the social forces underlying such politics are neither absent nor silent in New Zealand. To understand those forces, and how they coalesced in the early days of their organisation, is to go some way to understanding what a New Zealand fascism might look like today.

## White New Zealand Policy 1880s-1930s

The earliest forms of popular organised racist movements in New Zealand began to gain influence in the later decades of the 19th century. In his seminal work on the extreme right in New Zealand, *The Politics of Nostalgia*, Paul Spoonley identified leagues that formed in response to a growing fear of certain immigrants who they believed were a threat to British racial supremacy. However before getting into the organised groups who formed in response to this perceived threat, it is worth detailing the scope and scale of the legislation they fought to entrench and extend.

A significant amount of legislation passed from the 1880s to the 1930s targeted both specific groups and non-British immigrants in general. From around 1881 onward, the government enacted policies targeting Chinese, Indian, Samoan, Dalmatian, Italian, and Jewish immigrants.

A sizable number of the small Dalmatian community worked in the kauri-gum industry; on this basis legislation to restrict licensing to British gum diggers was passed in 1898, 1908, and 1910. Later, Central Europeans more generally were restricted in the post-war period. After the passing of the Undesirable Immigrants Exclusion Act 1919, people from the former German and Austro-Hungarian empires required a license from the Attorney-General to enter New Zealand. Although the legislative council found more difficulty in legislating against Indian immigrants, given British opposition as they were British subjects, the Undesirable Hawkers Prevention Bill was passed in 1896 with the aim of restricting their movement within New Zealand. In an attempt to work around this British opposition, the 1899 Immigration Restriction Act required non-British immigrants to make their applications in a European language.

The most significant series of legislative actions to be taken were against the Chinese. Beaglehole notes in *Refuge New Zealand* that some 21 pieces of legislation were passed against the growing Chinese community from 1879-1888 alone. The 1881 Chinese Immigrants Act initiated a £10 poll tax and restricted the number of Chinese immigrants to one per 10 tons of the vessels weight on which they arrived. This was cut in 1888 to one per 100 tons and again in 1896 to one per 200 tons, with the poll tax increased to £100 (a full decade's earnings for the average Chinese worker). The poll tax remained in place for 63 years, only being repealed in 1944 by the Finance Act (No. 3). Naturalisation laws were altered in 1892 to be free for all immigrants bar Chinese, and again in 1908 to end any path for Chinese to be naturalised citizens. Naturalisation for Chinese only began anew over four decades later in 1952. In 1907, Chinese immigrants were required to undertake an additional English reading test. Then

in 1908, Chinese people were required to undergo thumb-printing in order to acquire re-entry permits when leaving the country. They were also barred from receiving several state benefits by legislation passed in the 1890s-1920s.

The 'White New Zealand Policy', as it came to be known, had thus materialised out of a complex web of specific and generalised legislation largely but not entirely focused on the entry of new non-British immigrants. It formally came into being through the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920. This created a requirement to apply for permanent residency before arrival, effectively placing discretion for every applicant at the hands of the Minister of Customs. This was further extended by the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931 which prevented the entry of the majority of European immigrants from the continent. Although a very small number of immigrants still arrived, the arrival of Asians and Southern Europeans almost halted. It would not be until the aftermath of WWII that these policies would start to relax.

This legislation was not without its critics at the time (albeit small in number); Legislative Council member Henry Scotland was an early, prominent, and vocal opponent to restrictions on Chinese immigration. However, as the democratic state was already implementing hard-line immigration policies, early organised racist groups merely needed to call for existing policy to be maintained and expanded. Both historically progressive and reactionary governments alike pursued such policies; many of the aforementioned pieces of legislation were introduced under the first Liberal government's five successive terms in office from 1890-1911. William Pember Reeves, who represented the most radical left faction of the party (the 'state socialists' as they were dubbed), was a vocal proponent of severe curbs to Chinese immigration. However, the deeply conservative Reform government, who took office with the end of the first Liberal government, introduced the harshest of the White NZ Policy laws. Reform PM William Massey on the White NZ Policy:

the result of a deep-seated sentiment on the part of the large majority of the people of this country that this Dominion shall be what is often called a 'white' New Zealand.

Such policies alone do not make NZ any more of a proto-fascist state or any more racist than the Anglosphere or much of Europe at the time. Racism alone does not a fascist make. It did, however, form a template that some fascists in the present day still use as a basis for their vision of New Zealand, and can be considered one of the main pillars of openly ethno-nationalist politics here.



## Racial Supremacy Leagues 1890s-1920s

Early racist organisations appearing at the end of the 19th century aligned broadly in purpose with the White New Zealand Policy. The cross-class support within Pākehā society for severe immigration measures formalised largely in anti-immigrant leagues such as the Anti-Asiatic League and the Anti-Chinese League. Campaigns opposed to Yugoslav (Dalmatian) and Indian immigration likewise formed at the same time around the 1890s-1920s. These organisations were far from isolated and did not require front groups to gain public support like later far right formations would. The Anti-Chinese League and Returned Services Association (RSA) forged an alliance which proved a driving civic force in support for the Immigration Amendment Restriction Act 1920, an alliance which drew effective support from both the racial purity obsessed National Defence League and the early Labour Party alike.

Several explicit white supremacist organisations existed alongside the various anti-immigrant campaigns. The White Race League formed in 1907, with the goal of establishing a 'white race congress' in Europe to ensure the survival of the white race, considered to be facing an existential threat from Asian immigration. This internationalist outlook of encompassing the entirety of the ever ephemeral 'white race' the world over, rather than merely New Zealand, made the League a somewhat unique organisation. In effect, this amounts to the white genocide meme but many decades too early for the term. However, this ideological outlook made little difference in local practice, amounting to anti-Chinese lobbying similar to the anti-immigrant leagues of the time.

The White New Zealand League is the most well-known league from the period, formed by Pukekohe potato farmers in 1925. Their activities mirrored those of similar leagues in the hosting of public talks and publishing of widely-distributed pamphlets decrying the immigration of 'lowly Asiatics'. The initial thrust of the organisation was to pressure the government to pass legislation further cracking down on Chinese and Indian immigrants, in order to undercut the perceived threat of Asian landowners to the largely white rural farmers. This would develop over time at the behest of the League's chief ideologue and secretary George Parvin. His own efforts to research and present various internationally-sourced articles on the subjects of eugenics, 'scientific' race theory, and 'problems' with immigrant communities in other white-dominated parts of the Commonwealth, heavily influenced the thinking and rhetoric of the League. Their most infamous pamphlet, *Citizens of the Future are the Children of Today*, drew on contemporary figures from Australia and the US. The pamphlet bore a credo reading as

though it were a trial run of the 14 words:

Your obligations to posterity are great. Your inheritance was a White New Zealand. Keep it so for your childrens' children, And the Empire.

In 1926, the league sent a request to 200 local bodies throughout NZ to pass resolutions supporting the League's aims, for which they received positive replies from 160 of the bodies. According to Spoonley in *The Politics of Nostalgia*, those 160 bodies represented some 670,000 New Zealanders at the time (about 47% of the population).

The League produced, stoked, and kept alive a national hysteria around the supposed imminent collapse of New Zealand as a 'white' Dominion. The League was supported by prominent civil society groups (the RSA, for example), early nationalist groups (such as the NZ Natives Association or the National Defence League), to some extent the Labour Party, and several (particularly rural) MPs. This was largely motivated by fear from the white petit-bourgeois (small-scale business people and landowners) of competition in the local market by (typically Asian) foreigners. Although the League would largely be dead by the 1930s, Parvin remained a vocal figure in Pukekohe politics until the 1950s. The policies of the League would likewise be taken up after its demise by organisations including the RSA and the Pukekohe Federated Farmers (who argued as late as 1952 for the seizure of all Asian-owned land and their forced repatriation).

## Distant Early Warning: Joe Kum Yung and Lionel Terry

In establishing the tactics which these erstwhile defenders of the white race were willing to utilize, it is important to cover the 1905 murder of retired Chinese miner Joe Kum Yung by committed racist agitator Lionel Terry. Yung was an elderly retired miner who'd lived in New Zealand for 25 years, crippled from an accident and unable to earn his way back to China. Terry was a recent immigrant, having only been in the country for four years when he shot Kum Yung. Son of a successful English merchant, he'd spent time in the military and traveled to Southern Africa where he fought as a mounted policeman in the Second Matabele War. He also spent time in Australia, Canada, Dominica, Martinique, and the US. His, in his own words, deep hatred for 'black and coloured races' was well established by the time he immigrated here. He wrote what is likely one of the first far right tracts produced in New Zealand in 1904 while working for the Lands & Survey Department in Northland, *The Shadow*. Published by Terry himself, the book was mostly verse with a long introduction preaching the need for racial purity and arguing for something

approaching a kind of vaguely pre-Strasserist racial class war. From July-September 1905 he undertook a 300km trek from Mangonui to Wellington, distributing *The Shadow* and giving anti-Chinese lectures along the way. Upon arriving in Wellington, he sought audience from government officials and parliamentarians to hear his views, who heard him out but made no promises as to his proposed policies.

Ten days after arriving, Terry walked onto Haining St and shot Joe Kum Yung in the head, handing himself into police the morning after. If any motivation went into the selection of Kum Yung specifically as the Chinese man he would kill that night, it was likely his age and disability. The day after the killing a letter he sent to *The Press* was published.

I will not under any consideration allow my rights and those of my brother Britons to be jeopardised by alien invaders: to make this perfectly plain I have this evening put a Chinaman to death.

Terry was convicted and sentenced to death on the 21st November that year, but it was commuted to life imprisonment in a sanatorium on the grounds of insanity a week later. For a time after his imprisonment, he had considerable public sympathy, if not for his actions then for his views. Though dying in 1952 at Seacliff Mental Hospital in obscurity after decades of imprisonment, he has become something of a low-key martyr for some corners of the far right. Terry represents both the logical conclusion of the Sinophobic hysteria of the era, and a distant early warning of the kinds of vulgar nationalism which continue to hold a certain public sympathy over a century later. Likewise, the shooting set a precedent of what could be an 'acceptable' amount of political violence without damaging the overall appeal of the ideology. Though sporadic, acts of violence against political opponents and various communities would dot the far right into the latter end of the 20th century.

### Jewish Refugees and Anti-Semitism 1930s-1940s

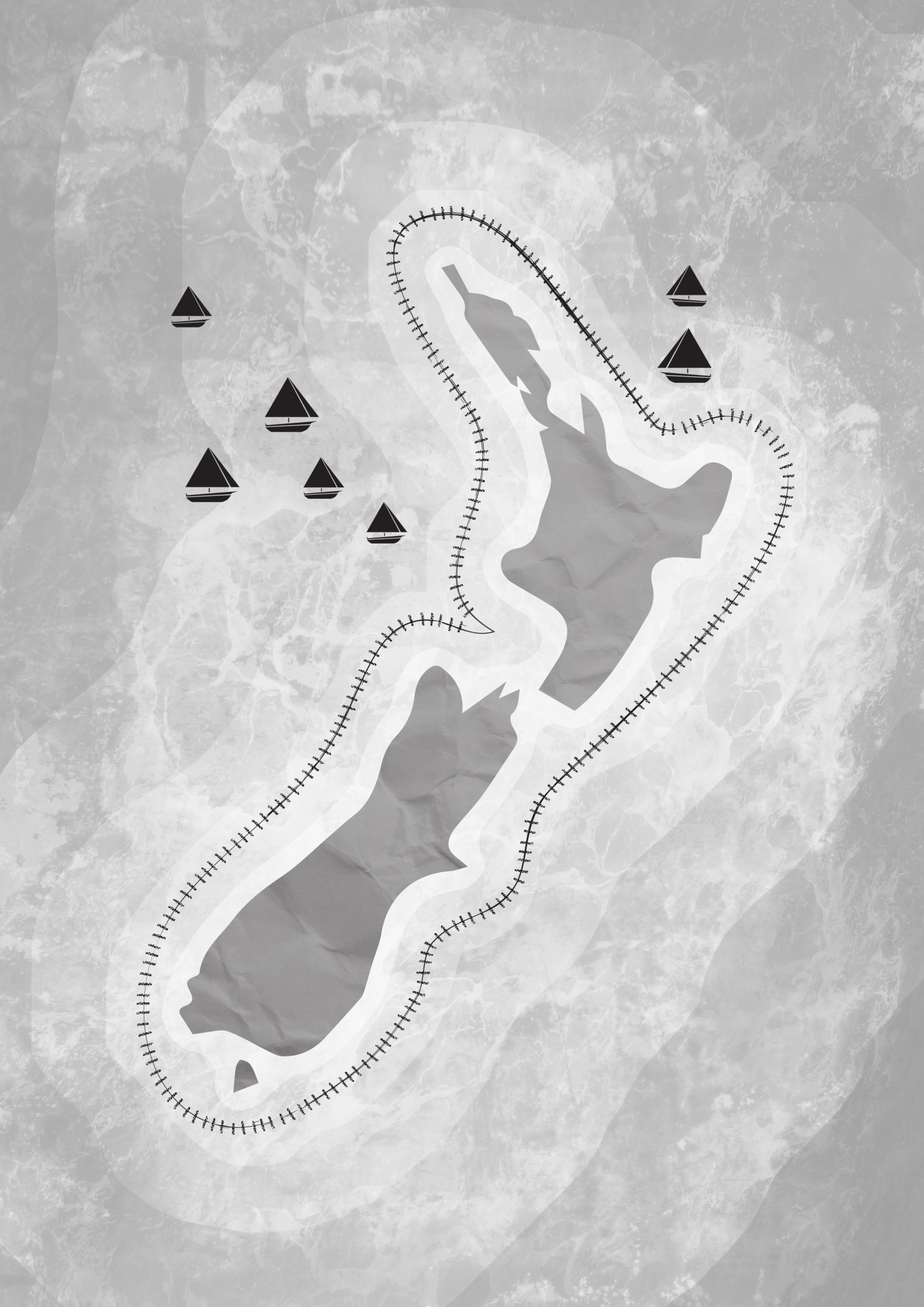
The common conception of New Zealand as a country that avoided popular fascism is often either attributed by the left to the First Labour Government or by the right to a cultural affiliation for a 'fairness' driven rational capitalism. The Savage government oversaw the most wide-ranging period of economic and social reform yet experienced in New Zealand, matched only by the reforms of the right under Douglas and Richardson. To put it in very moralistic terms, efforts to ameliorate the suffering experienced during the Depression to some extent robbed potential far right movements of their social base among the petit-bourgeois and possible reactionary

working-class allies. At a very surface level this is accurate enough, at least to suffice the question without really thinking about it too much. At most the New Zealand Legion has been suggested as, if not a directly comparable organisation, one which filled the socio-political role of such movements for the local context. However, such an explanation skates over the fact that not only were the socio-economic factors prevalent but a virulent racial politics was at best far from uncommon.

Although refugee humanitarianism is raised as a major pillar of liberal iterations of New Zealand national identity, it would be ahistorical to claim this as the case for much of the 20th century. In the years leading up to the outbreak of war, New Zealand accepted just a thousand refugees from Europe. Bolivia, with a comparable population of around 2.5 million to New Zealand's 1.6 million, took in fourteen thousand refugees in the same period. This is in no small part because there was no willingness to wind back enforcement of the White New Zealand policy. Refugees were not yet distinguished from other immigrants as any particularly special case, and so still had to meet the extraordinarily strict entrance criteria in place. This was compounded by a direct antipathy toward Jewish immigration. The Comptroller of Customs in the mid-1930s, quoted by Ann Beaglehole, "Non-Jewish applicants are regarded as a more suitable type of immigrant." Then Minister of Customs Walter Nash put it more tactfully in expressing his concern that "There is a major difficulty of absorbing these people in our cultural life without raising a feeling of antipathy to them." In 1937 an Aliens Committee was established to consider restrictions on refugees, partially in response to mounting applications by those fleeing Europe and partially in response to the number of pro-Nazi organisations appearing. This led in June 1940 to the policy of "not granting entry permits for aliens to enter New Zealand except in most exceptional circumstances", effectively closing the door to all further refugees. In October the same year the Aliens Emergency Regulations came into effect, allowing the deportation and internment of 'aliens'.

Admiration for European fascism was likewise far from uncommon as the 1930s progressed, a topic covered by both Spoonley and Beaglehole. Some publishers were openly sympathetic to the Nazi cause, and major figures on the Australasian far right wrote prolifically to a growing audience at the time. A.N. Field, son of Reform MP Tom Field, took his place as one of the earliest far right ideologues in New Zealand, and was a strong influence on the social credit movements of Australia and New Zealand. Eric Butler, who would go on to found the Australian League of Rights (and later its Kiwi cousin) likewise began his long career in the 1930s publishing anti-Semitic tracts. Anti-Semitic and pro-fascist sentiment wasn't restricted to the reactionary fringe







however. A radio program for the Hitler Youth was carried on the New Zealand Radio Record listings right up to 1938, among other shortwave broadcasts from Berlin. John A. Lee spoke of his admiration for certain aspects of Hitler and Mussolini's doctrines in parliament in 1938, and had pamphlets published on the matter as late as 1940. German social clubs drew Kiwis sympathetic to the Nazi cause, and some came under explicitly fascist leadership.

While far from uncommon, this was likewise not universal. A visit by Count Felix von Luckner, part of a two-year diplomatic world voyage sponsored by the Nazi government in 1937, was met with mixed responses. While his lectures were well enough received, his overall visit to New Zealand never escaped a cloud of suspicion and hostility from many who considered him little more than a propagandist for Nazism.

Beaglehole summarizes of the period that "Suspicion of foreigners, and of diversity, was still very much a feature of the New Zealand to which the refugees came." Most anti-Semitism in New Zealand at the time was, however, diffuse and without organised expression. The one major exception to this was the internal politics of the exploding social credit movement.

## Two Movements: New Zealand Legion and Social Credit League

Although fascism is an inaccurate term to give either the New Zealand Legion or the Social Credit League, both are important aspects of reactionary political history though for different reasons. Looking at both gives more an indication where the greatest potential for fascism lay in the 1930s.

## New Zealand Legion

The Legion came into existence as the effort of a number of dissident Reform supporters, largely farmers, who had become increasingly disillusioned with the 'socialistic' response of the sitting conservative government to the worsening Depression. Initially it appeared as the New Zealand National Movement in 1932, after little success renaming to the Legion in 1933 and appointing Robert Campbell Begg the leader. The period saw the growth of new conservative parties and organisations well to the right of the ruling Reform/United Coalition throughout the early 1930s. This was in response to (comparatively mild) interventionist measures being used by the government in response to the economic crisis. The Legion rested on core values of nationalism, individualism, personal morality and sacrifice for the nation; Begg identified moral decay and a corrupt party system as the reasons for the country's crisis. As to the latter, the Legion proposed to abolish

formalised parties and interest groups altogether, returning to a mythologised political dynamic from before the formation of the Liberal Party.

In economic terms the Legion was torn between factions within the organisation who supported proto-Keynesian interventionism, social credit monetary theories, and laissez-faire free market economics. Much of the leadership were free market purists. However, the Chairman of the Legion's Economic Research Committee, Evan Sydney Parry, was enamoured with the American New Deal and praised Fascist Italy as an exemplar of 'sane planning or state collectivism'. He was responsible for much of the Legion's economic policy and produced reading lists for all members which covered writers from founding social credit theorist Major C.H. Douglas to Keynes to the Fabians G.D.H. Cole and Sir William Beveridge.

At times the movement held an air of crypto-fascist aesthetic in its fanatical crusade for 'national unity' and desire to abolish interest groups and the party system. But this was underpinned by its individualist ethos, arguing that 'party dictatorship' had curtailed the freedom of MPs. Furthermore, the emphasis on national unity and greater autonomy from Britain was merely an extension of this individualism to the scale of the nation-state – an orientation toward national independence. As Pugh puts it in his 1969 thesis on the Legion, they desired for New Zealand a return to "a 'free age' assumed to have existed before Vogel's borrowing policies and Seddon's state paternalism." This nationalist ethos was reflected in the organisation on a national level. Though it peaked in 1933 and collapsed through 1934, for a brief window of around six months the Legion peaked at 20,000 members spread across 700 branches organised on a national level into 18 Divisions. For reference the Labour Party had 30,000 members at the time, while the Social Credit League numbered about 4,000; though Begg was well off his predicted 400,000 members, the Legion was for a time a major civic force. Indeed, their early public meetings in major centres such as Dunedin, Nelson, Wellington and Auckland averaged 2,000 attendees. They also did well in smaller towns, meetings in places like Gore and Hastings drawing 500 people were not uncommon.

The Legion had some fascism-adjacent elements, but the historical consensus (for which I agree) is that they were not fascist in any sense of the word. The New Zealand Legion embodied a (frequently incoherent) conservative radicalism that was willing to dabble in militarist tendencies, but in the end was still dedicated to the parliamentary system. They left little behind when they collapsed in 1934, and conservative reaction funnelled through various conservative formations before eventually channelling into the newly formed National Party a few years later. The Social Credit League had a longer

lasting impact. But the Legion was unique in its mass organisation on militaristic lines and nationalist character.

## Social Credit League

While not as dramatic a surge as the Legion, social credit theory experienced an explosive growth in New Zealand across the mid-1930s. To do so, it is necessary to understand the class basis for social credit organisations among the rural petite-bourgeois. By the end of the 1920s, the class alignment of the major parties had entered a period of dis-oriented fracture. This was especially so for the rural petite-bourgeois (largely small farmers) who changed allegiance several times. As an organised political force, small farmers had formed part of the liberal-labour coalition which underpinned the long lived Liberal government of the 1890s-1900s. They had benefited greatly from the busting up of big landowning monopolies and other land reforms over the 1890s. However, they began to drift away and assert political class independence as early as 1899 with the formation of the original New Zealand Farmers' Union.

Rural political support across the entire farming community was heavily influenced by the Farmers' Union, which redirected considerable support away from the progressive 'lib-lab' coalition toward considerably more conservative politics. This pivot toward open support for property ownership and capitalism entailed in turn a growing hostility to trade unions and socialist ideas and was vital in redirecting support from the Liberals to Reform leading into the 1911 election. During the Great Strike of 1913, Massey's Cossacks – the mounted strike breaking militia mobilised by Prime Minister William Massey to smash militant workers' pickets – drew largely from young small farmers. But by the 1922 party dissatisfaction had returned in the form of the newly established Country Party, founded on a mixture of agrarianism and social credit theory by dissidents in the Auckland Farmers' Union. Though never a major party, it peaked at 2.34% in 1931, it contested five elections from 1925 to 1938 and party leader Harold Rushworth held the Bay of Islands seat from 1928 until retiring in 1938. The party tended to align with Labour in parliament out of a mutual distrust for the financial and banking industries. Though Labour began altering policy to accommodate small farmers from 1927 onward, rural petite-bourgeois support for Labour wouldn't occur until the mid to later-1930s.

Outside parliament, a growing interest in social credit theory – which had partially been articulated by the Country Party – saw the development of the Social Credit Association over the 1930s. The movement surged in support over the first half of the decade, from 6 branches nationwide in 1931 to 225

in 1935. It was helped in part by a campaign against the Reserve Bank Bill in 1932-'33, and a national tour by the originator of social credit theory Major C.H. Douglas in 1934. Social Credit secured an informal alliance with Labour over the mid-1930s, in some ways mirroring the alliance of the working class and the old rural petite-bourgeois which supported the Liberals in the 1890s. It entailed the rural petite-bourgeois suspending their opposition to trade unions while the Labour Party entertained monetary reforms into the 1935 election. The alliance was brief, and was largely moribund by the later 1930s, though some individual Labour ministers remained sympathetic to social credit ideas. Among them John A. Lee, Frank Langstone, Walter Nash, and William Jordan; Langstone even ran for the Social Credit Party in 1957. In 1942 Social Credit decided an independent electoral front was needed and formed the short lived Real Democracy Movement to contest the 1943 election with 25 candidates. It was a stillborn effort, however, as the RDM dissolved following a weak result of just 0.53% (4421 votes). The foray into electoral politics would be completed by the transformation of the Social Credit Association in 1953 into the Social Credit Political League.

It is now the point to discuss why Social Credit must be considered in a discussion of potential fascism in 1930s New Zealand. In *The Politics of Nostalgia*, Spoonley records a number of instances of anti-Semitism within Social Credit from the 1930s right through to the 1980s. Conspiracy theories around the financial industry and the banking system were common in New Zealand well beyond the rural petite-bourgeois during the 1930s-1940s. But it was in the pages of publications aligned to the social credit movement such as *Plain Talk*, *Why*, *New Zealand Social Credit News*, and the *New Zealand Social Creditor* that the link was explicitly made in essays and opinion pieces with "the Jewish problem". *Plain Talk* is particularly noted as being the primary distributor of anti-Semitic material during the period, producing tracts with such titles as *Is There a Jewish Peril?*, *The Hidden Hand Revealed* and material on the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion". Various papers were responsible for running explicitly anti-Semitic and sometimes pro-fascist pieces (for example a 1935 article in *Why* praising Hitler, simply attributed to 'Pro-Nazi'). Although *Plain Talk* was the only openly fascist publisher at the time, anti-Semitism was rife in the pages of a number of magazines, and within Social Credit at large.

At the time the most important author for both far right politics and the rural petite-bourgeois in general in New Zealand was Nelson born journalist A.N. Field. Son of the Reform MP Tom Field, he began his political publishing as early as 1909 with the conspiratorial magazine *Citizen*. He continued to write various tracts and books from Nelson from

the 1910s right through to the 1960s. While his work was predicated on monetary conspiracy right from the start, it is his publications in the 1930s that pushed open anti-Semitism. Texts such as *The Truth About the Slump* (1931), *The Money Spider* (1933), *The World's Conundrum* (1934), *Today's Greatest Problem* (1938), and *The Truth About New Zealand* (1939) all mixed social credit theory and anti-Semitism. Also noteworthy are publications like *Unmasking Socialism* (1938) and *Why Colleges Breed Communists* (1941), further throwing anti-socialist polemics into the heady mix of crank economic theory and anti-Semitism. Anti-socialism held a position as a central pillar of right-wing reactionary politics, with the invocation of creeping socialism being a key feature in the wider conspiratorial worldview. This proved enduringly useful to groups and figures on the reactionary right given its common political ground with more mainstream conservatism. Though not the only anti-Semite writing in New Zealand at the time by far, A.N. Field is notable for his systematic application of a 'world Jewish conspiracy' to New Zealand conditions and the international attention he received in doing so. His books, alongside international acclaim, were wildly popular within Social Credit.

The contraction of the rural petite-bourgeois over the coming decades shrunk the support base for Social Credit, and at any rate few in the movement held revolutionary aims. Many, despite holding conspiratorial anti-Semitic world views and suspicious of the government, had no interest in moving beyond a reformist response to this perceived threat. But it was within the Social Credit Association, and the many figures and smaller social credit organisations that revolved around it, that coherent fascist ideology formed with the capacity to mass publish that message to a wide audience. The support base and membership existed among the rural petite-bourgeois for a genuine fascist movement, while the conspiratorial theory and widespread racial prejudice of the era was conducive to fascist ideology spreading into wider society at large. Though no truly fascist mass movement existed in New Zealand during the 1930s, the conditions for one certainly did.





## “Nazis humiliated”



The traditional-fascist National Front have recently attempted to hold meetings in Christchurch and Dunedin, New Zealand, protesting a fictional “white genocide”, which have been shut down by activist opposition<sup>1</sup>. The following piece by Daphne Lawless originally appeared in the November 2004 issue of *Socialist Worker Monthly Review* (New Zealand) and describes a successful anti-fascist mobilization against the same group. It has been mildly edited for clarity. As a consequence of this defeat, National Front leader Kyle Chapman soon quit for “family reasons”, returning to Christchurch, and the National Front in Wellington shrank to a minuscule size.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2018/05/dunedin-white-new-zealand-and-our-future-rally-cancelled.html>

<sup>2</sup> See also MCA’s original report from the day: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0410/S00243.htm>

Well over a thousand anti-racist protesters hit Wellington's streets on Saturday 23 October 2004 to celebrate cultural diversity— dwarfing and humiliating the Nazi National Front's rally on the same day. Multi-Cultural Aotearoa (MCA), the coalition organising the march, was formed in response to racist attacks on Somali immigrants and desecration of Jewish cemeteries in Wellington. The group unanimously decided at a public meeting to hold a counter-march to a planned National Front rally against Asian immigration.

Started by a small group of anarchist and socialist activists, MCA quickly gained mass support in the community. The march was endorsed by the Federation of Ethnic Councils and representatives of refugee groups. The Wellington Seafarers' branch of the Maritime Union acted as marshals, while the Association of University Staff and the Service and Food Workers' Union also had banners on the march.

The crowd on the day was diverse and colourful. On the *Stormfront* web forum, Nazis condemned Multi-Cultural Aotearoa as a coalition of 'Jews, commies and fags', and there certainly was a diverse turnout on the march. Representatives from several ethnic and immigrant communities marched alongside "Fairies Against Fascists" and gays and lesbians promoting legalization of same-sex civil unions. The crowd was entertained by street theatre and a wide variety of speakers.

Estimates of the final size once the rally reached parliament varied from 800 (police & *NZ Herald*) to two thousand (*Sunday Star Times*).

This was to be the National Front's big day, with their führer and Christchurch mayoral candidate Kyle Chapman declaring to his followers that it was to be "the greatest event in [the] NZ Nationalist Movement so far". But in the lead-up to the march, the NF thoroughly embarrassed themselves in the public eye.

Photographs of National Front members giving the fascist salute and wearing swastikas were published in the major daily papers. When questioned about the photo, Chapman claimed that he had "no idea" what the people behind him were doing and that they had just "showed up in a car".

Meanwhile, National Front secretary and main ideologue Kerry Bolton issued a leaflet claiming that MCA were a group of "left-wing scaremongers target[ing] ethnic minorities". This included the hilarious claim that the National Front only attracted violent skinheads because of leftists saying that the National Front were Nazis!

Once it became clear how much support the MCA march was attracting, the National Front panicked. They dropped the anti-Asian focus for their rally,

declaring it to be a rally "in defence of the New Zealand flag" at the last minute. Their tiny rally, attracting a few dozen dedicated fascists and skinheads, was held two hours before the MCA march was due to arrive, and was long gone by that time.

Despite their tough talk leading up to the march, the Nazis were obviously desperate to avoid any confrontation with the anti-racists which would reveal their true impotence. But they even failed in this.

While the MCA rally was hearing speakers at Parliament, word spread around the crowd that a group of National Front members remained at Wellington railway station. A section of the rally peeled off to confront the fascists.

"A National Front member threw the first punch and it was all on," says an eyewitness. "Then they lost. A National Front car drove into and hit one protester, which caused a whole bunch of protesters to pull bits off the car." Witnesses report that Kyle Chapman himself was in this car.

Three National Front members and two protestors were arrested. After the formal end of the rally, many protestors went to the Wellington police station to offer their support for the arrested anti-fascists. All in all, it was a wonderful day for racial tolerance and the power of protest. But there were also signs in the rally of how this campaign could be taken to the next step.

Some of the chants on the rally called for the freeing of Algerian political prisoner Ahmed Zaoui. At Parliament, many speakers pointed to Zaoui's detention without trial by the Labour government as an example of state racism.

Other speakers drew attention to the way that ethnic minorities and Māori are used as "political footballs" in election year by right-wing politicians. There were banners protesting the foreshore and seabed legislation, and several tangata whenua speakers gave the lie to the National Front's claim to be "pro-Maori".

It's vital that we continue the momentum that this march has built. Hopefully after this the Nazi National Front will be discouraged from raising their shaven heads for a while. But a real fight against fascism has to be based on a challenge to the system as a whole. We can't beat fascism for good without a challenge to the worldwide system of exploitation and oppression which can unite workers of all races and nationalities.

We need a continuing anti-racist movement, building on its existing links with unions, ethnic communities and other grassroots organisations. Continuing the pressure for the release of Ahmed Zaoui would be a good next step in building this movement.

# Fascism in Australia

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
SLACKBASTARD



Andy Fleming, aka slackbastard is a minor internet celebrity with a range of platforms promoting radical politics, particularly focusing on anti-fascism. Fightback's ANI WHITE interviews him about fascism, anti-fascism and politics in Australia today.

**Ani: Your online platforms cover a range of issues, but particularly focus on anti-fascism. Is there any reason you consider this work to be particularly important?**

Andy: I began blogging in earnest in late 2005, while the Facebook page went up in 2010 and I've been Twittering away since 2009. Since I began, the primary focus of the blog has gradually evolved into anti-fascism, which in this case means monitoring the activities of various far-right actors, mostly of Australian origin, and with a particular focus on Melbourne (where I live). One of the main reasons for this is the relative absence of other forums in which this discussion might take place. Basically, there are very few public resources dedicated to monitoring fascism and the far right in Australia, and over time the blog has become a (I hope useful) resource for those wanting to explore this world. Certainly, anyone who jumps online and searches for information about fascism and the far right in Australia will sooner or later (generally sooner) stumble upon the blog. As a result, particularly since the emergence of 'Reclaim Australia' in early 2015, but also preceding it, I've been contacted by numerous journalists, researchers, students and so on, who want to be backgrounded on and seek orientation towards the contemporary antics of the far right. In a sense, it's developed its own momentum, and the blog's contents reflect what it is that others identify as being especially interesting and useful about it in its coverage of this domain. Beyond this, I identify as an anarchist, and from this perspective fascism is deeply antithetical to my own political commitments. Further, I suppose I'm one of those who believes that there is actually scope for a fascist or proto-fascist movement to develop in Australia. This is informed by the country's status as a British penal colony which, at the beginning of the twentieth-century and its establishment as the Commonwealth of Australia, formally adopted white nationalism as state policy, a policy abandoned only relatively recently. In other words, I think Australia is relatively fertile ground upon which a fascist movement might develop, and historically-speaking, its relative absence is in large part due to the role of the state in already having captured that political territory.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This essay covers more of this territory: <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190274559.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190274559-e-32>.



**Ani: What are the defining traits of neo-fascism?**

Andy: Well, that depends: in one sense, neo-fascism may be traced back to the immediate post-WWII era, in which the defeated forces of fascism in Europe were forced to reassess, regroup, and rearticulate their politics. But I suppose in the more immediate historical and social context, I'd suggest that the 'newer' expressions of fascist doctrine and movement are shaped, in critical ways, by the inauguration of the (seemingly endless) 'War on Terror' in 2001 and attendant spike in Islamophobia, neoliberal crisis and, in the Australian context, the punitive measures adopted by both major parties with regards the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees: 'Fortress Australia' (see below). This is the political and social backdrop against which newer fascist political formations have arisen, and whose political expressions are variations on older and generally familiar themes: racism and white supremacy, ultra-nationalism, the cult of masculinist violence, and so on. (For what it's worth, I think Roger Griffin's concept of 'palingenetic ultra-nationalism' remains a key reference point for understanding generic fascism.)

**Ani: What neo-fascist groups are operating in Australia today?**

Andy: There's a small number of formally-constituted groups -- political parties like the 'Australia First Party', neo-Nazi grouplets like 'Antipodean Resistance' and 'Nationalist Alternative' and so on -- but by my reckoning, most of these groups operate on a more informal level, as part of wider social networks which have as their chief platform social media (especially Facebook). In other words, while documenting the moments when groups formally constitute themselves as groups<sup>2</sup> is important, it's also important not to lose sight of the political undercurrents which generate such moments. This, I think, is what gives rise to things like the Cronulla pogrom<sup>3</sup>, helps to explain the sudden emergence and eventual collapse of 'Reclaim Australia', and other such events. Further, the same kinds of ideas that motivate neo-fascists are also present, to a greater-or-lesser degree, in mainstream politics, and it's useful to examine, for example, the ways in which various mythologies about 'Cultural Marxism' have moved from the political margins to the centre<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> See *A (very) brief guide to the Australian far right* (December 2016 Edition) <http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/?p=40626>

<sup>3</sup> See 'Under the Beach, the Barbed Wire', Angela Mitropoulos, *Mute*, February 7, 2006: <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/under-beach-barbed-wire>

<sup>4</sup> See Martin Jay, 'Dialectic of Counter-Enlightenment: The Frankfurt School as Scapegoat of the Lunatic Fringe' : <http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/?p=29456>

**Ani: Can you tell us about the new group Antipodean Resistance, which appears to be more militant than the existing groups?**

Antipodean Resistance (AR) is a relatively new grouplet which is neo-Nazi, mostly composed of young men in their teens and twenties, and which specialises in provocative propaganda. It's claimed to have a membership in the hundreds but this seems doubtful. To date, its militancy is confined to its rhetoric. The group emerged in late 2016 and has gained some media attention as a result of it targeting schools, University campuses and political offices with its posters and stickers. It has its origins among a handful of 'United Patriots Front' (UPF) supporters in Melbourne but has subsequently extended its reach to other cities and towns in Victoria and to other states. It's also connected to and models itself upon a handful of other neo-Nazi groups: the banned organisation 'National Action' in the UK, the 'Nordic Resistance Movement' in Scandinavia, and 'Atomwaffen' in the US; this networking took place via the now-defunct neo-Nazi website 'Iron March'. National Action was proscribed as a terrorist organisation in December 2016; a number of its members have been arrested and charged with preparation of terrorist acts, while the group notoriously celebrated the assassination of British MP Jo Cox in June 2016. Members of the Nordic Resistance Movement in Sweden have been convicted of carrying out bombing attacks upon asylum seeker refugees and a left-wing bookshop, while members of Atomwaffen are currently on trial for a string of murders, the most recent being that of Jewish student Blaze Bernstein in January 2018. Currently, the group is linked to members of the UPF and something called 'The Lads Society', which describes itself as a fraternal organisation and which, in October last year, opened up a social centre in the Melbourne suburb of Cheltenham. The leaseholder is ex-UPF member Tom Sewell and in January the centre served as the venue for a joint meeting with another racist gang called the 'True Blue Crew' based in the Victorian town of Bendigo and the suburb of Melton. (The meeting was called in order to discuss the formation of a vigilante gang to confront an alleged African gang crime-wave.) Outside of neo-Nazi skinhead groups like Blood & Honour and the (Southern Cross) Hammerskins, AR is one of relatively few grouplets that doesn't bother to disguise its commitment to Nazi doctrines.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> For those interested, you can read more about AR in the following: *Who are Antipodean Resistance?* (<http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/?p=41859>); *Jacob Hersant : An Antipodean Resistance Lad* (<http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/?p=42788>); Julie Nathan, "Antipodean Resistance: The Rise and Goals of Australia's New Nazis" (<http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2018/04/20/4833287.htm>).

**Ani: Pauline Hanson's racial populist party One Nation has had a resurgence recently. What is the relationship between One Nation and more explicit neo-fascist groups, if any?**

Andy: In its earlier iteration, this subject was explored by Danny Ben-Moshe (see: 'One Nation and the Australian far right', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.35, No.3, 2001). They concluded that, while neo-fascist and other (racist) right-wing actors joined the party and sought to obtain influence within it, this endeavour was largely unsuccessful, and in the end their presence proved to be simply destabilising. One Nation's return has been accompanied by similar manoeuvres. In terms of policy, fear of being 'swamped by Asians' has been replaced by fear of being 'swamped by Muslims' -- so hey, you can't say that Hanson isn't adaptable (though you might also say that she's a rank opportunist) -- but even a cursory examination of its candidates for office reveals an often bizarre amalgam of all kinds of fears and resentments, and the party is, perhaps not surprisingly, still beset by internal ructions. Still, it's my impression that Hanson is now better able to exert control over the party as a whole, and it exists as a kind of permanent shrine to her endless -- and I do mean endless -- whining. Naturally, racists have welcomed her and the party's return; to date, however, the party has failed to break out of its chiefly regional and rural base in Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales, where it competes most keenly with the Nationals (the junior ruling Coalition partner) for support. Race and immigration remain key issues for the party and its supporters, whose views on other matters and voting record in parliament otherwise reflects that of the Coalition.

**Ani: While neo-fascists seek an escalation of violence against refugees and visible minorities, the Australian state is already exceptional in its brutal Mandatory Detention policy. Can you tell us about Australia's refugee policy, and about the refugee solidarity movement?**

Andy: It's certainly the case that the Australian state does a good job of brutalising asylum seekers, but its exceptionality may be rather short-lived, sadly, as governments and parties in Europe now look to Australia for cutting-edge methods of controlling population flows. These policies and programs have proven inspiring to the continent's far right<sup>6</sup>. In general, the policy of mandatory detention, inaugurated in 1994 under the Keating Labor government, has enjoyed bipartisan support ever since, and the Australian public largely supports the measures adopted to penalise those asylum seekers who arrive on Australia's shores by boat. Occasionally, some noises in opposition will emanate from back-

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/how-eu-ropes-far-right-fell-in-love-with-australias-immigration-policy>

benchers, but it seems as though there are no real cracks in the parliamentary facade, and so the policy will remain in place for some time to come. Of course, some Australians celebrate the state's cruelty, and workers in the detention industry -- which, like other government services, is now semi-privatised -- notoriously posed with Hanson at a Reclaim rally in 2015. On the flip side, the relocation of the concentration camps from the cities to rural areas and then to other islands -- and the various, generally crackpot schemes hatched in conjunction with regional governments for them to accept some portion of Australia's inmates -- could be read as being a reaction to resistance within the camps, as well as a rational desire to keep torture out of public sight. Currently, the refugee solidarity movement is largely confined to the conduct of periodic rallies and protests, the effects of which are generally minimal outside, perhaps, of keeping the abuse of refugees and asylum seekers in the public mind. Other, related campaigns have sought to attack the underlying infrastructure of the detention industry, especially through divestment campaigns<sup>7</sup>, and specifically by seeking to have union superfunds withdrawn from the industry<sup>8</sup>. This has met with some limited success<sup>9</sup> and lukewarm support from the labour movement, which remains dominated by the ALP. A relatively recent project is called 'Can't Stand Buy', which seeks (or sought) to harness acts of civil disobedience to escalate the economic and social costs of maintaining the regime. It generated some media attention, but not mass public participation. In general, the XBorder blog<sup>10</sup> is a useful resource -- one which also attempts to situate the regime within a global complex of institutions and political arrangements -- and the 'RISE: Refugees, Survivors and Ex-Detainees' organisation in Melbourne<sup>11</sup> is a unique presence in the 'refugee solidarity' movement, with both it and the imprisoned journalist Behrouz Boochani<sup>12</sup> continuing to be important voices of protest.

**Ani: Melbourne cops have recently made headlines for police brutality. What do we need to know about our mates in the Victorian Police?**

Andy: The short answer? They're not your mates! More seriously, there's a handful of different organisations that monitor police activity in Victoria, one of which is the 'Police Accountability Project'<sup>13</sup>: I recommend that those interested read its publications. The 'Melbourne Activist Legal Service' (MALS) is another interesting and worthwhile project. Of

<sup>7</sup> <http://divestfromdetention.com>

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, UniSuper Divest: <http://unisuperdivest.net>

<sup>9</sup> HESTA Divest: <http://hestadivest.net>

<sup>10</sup> <https://xborderoperationalmatters.wordpress.com>

<sup>11</sup> <http://riserefugee.org>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/profile/behrouz-boochani>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.policeaccountability.org.au>

particular relevance to anti-fascists, in early 2017, the Victorian state government introduced a bill to parliament -- the 'Crimes Amendment (Public Order) Bill 2017' -- which, inter alia, criminalises the wearing of clothing which obscures one's appearance. MALS has critiqued the introduction of these and similar laws<sup>14</sup>. Oh, and 'Sisters Inside'<sup>15</sup>, an organisation based in Queensland, is holding a Prison Abolition conference in Brisbane in November, which readers may find of interest.

**Ani: I recently read a mainstream Australian opinion piece which promoted the 'Cultural Marxism' conspiracy theory, a far-right theory that Marxist elites are dismantling Western civilisation. While it's very flattering to imagine Marxists have anything like that influence, it was shocking for me to see this in a mainstream opinion piece. I recently came over from Aotearoa/New Zealand, and while we certainly have conservative media, mainstream promotion of these kind of outright far-right ideas seems particularly extreme. Can you tell us about the mainstreaming of these ideas in Australian media?**

Andy: To begin with, I think Martin Jay's essay is required reading on this subject; further, I'd recommend "Cultural Marxism": a uniting theory for right-wingers who love to play the victim<sup>16</sup> and 'Chris Uhlmann should mind his language on 'cultural Marxism''<sup>17</sup> by Jason Wilson, which helps to situate the idea in contemporary Australian political discourse. In terms of how this theory has assumed some mainstream prominence, I'd suggest that this is no accident, and demonstrates that the far right is able to produce ideas that, over time, can reach a much wider audience. Much the same can be said of the 'White Genocide' meme, especially as it applies to South Africa. In just the last week, the Australian attorney-general, Christian Porter, has urged white South African farmers seeking asylum in Australia to contact his office for specialist advice; previously, the Minister for Home Affairs, Peter Dutton, had publicly expressed support for the proposal to bring 'persecuted' white South African farmers to Australia under a special visa arrangement.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://melbourneactivistlegalsupport.org/2017/05/17/about-the-anti-mask-public-order-bill>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sistersinside.com.au>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/19/cultural-marxism-a-uniting-theory-for-rightwingers-who-love-to-play-the-victim>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/22/chris-uhlmann-should-mind-his-language-on-cultural-marxism>

<sup>18</sup> See also: Jon Piccini, "Peter Dutton's 'fast track' for white South African farmers is a throwback to a long, racist history", <https://theconversation.com/peter-duttons-fast-track-for->

I'm unsure how Australian mainstream media compares to that in Aotearoa/New Zealand, but outside of state media, it's my understanding that private ownership is exceptionally highly concentrated (even for a Western democracy), and Rupert Murdoch (via NewsCorpse) rules over a very large chunk of this private kingdom. The only national daily newspaper, 'The Australian', has been running at a loss basically since it first began publishing in 1964, but serves as the flagship for conservative politics, a useful political tool for elites. If you examine the proliferation of the term in the pages of 'The Australian' (print and online), it seems to have undergone a sharp increase over the course of the last two to three years, and where previously it was closely-associated with the ravings of someone like Anders Breivik (or to be found only in an especially apoplectic 'letter to the editor'), it's now considered part and parcel of respectable discourse. The relative popularity of the term is partly attributable, I would suggest, to its flexibility, and each and every 'progressive' idea or movement of the last several decades has been attributed to the influence of 'Cultural Marxism'.

**Ani: In recent years some liberals and leftists have bought into the idea that the 'white working class' was left behind by multiculturalism. What is your take on this?**

Andy: For various reasons, I'm not especially convinced by this line of argument, but I should say at the outset that there's a wealth of literature on the subject of 'multiculturalism' and its meaning for Australian society, and I'm unable to do much more than make a few notes regarding it. In which context, in practice, 'multiculturalism' typically means 'multi-ethnic', 'multinational' and/or 'multiracial', and 'culture' is understood to be synonymous with these terms. Thus there is 'British culture', 'Irish culture', 'Italian culture', 'Black culture', 'Asian culture' and so on; further, these are typically assumed to be unitary (which is, in my view, not the case). In other words, I think that there are some conceptual issues with the uses to which this term is put, and addressing these is necessary before the matter can

be discussed more sensibly. In the Australian context, 'multiculturalism' can refer both to: a) demographic changes, especially in the post-WWII era, in the ethnic composition of an overwhelmingly British and Irish-derived settler-colonial population and also; b) changes in state policy following the abandonment of both the White Australia policy and the assimilationist doctrines which replaced them. More generally, it seems fairly obvious that the '(white)

---

[white-south-african-farmers-is-a-throwback-to-a-long-racist-history-93476](#), and John Marnell, "South Africa: where 'Australia' is code for racist", <https://overland.org.au/2018/03/south-africa-where-australia-is-code-for-racist/>.



working class' has not benefited from a whole range of state policies, because the purpose of those policies is not to benefit the working class as a class: generally-speaking, the state remains the instrument of the ruling class, and reflects its interests and the interests of those forces which dominate the economy. If there is some truth to the notion that the 'white working class' has been left behind by multiculturalism, it's the proposal that, as state policy, multiculturalism has tended to promote the advancement of an 'ethnic' middle class which may/ not advance the interests of the specific grouping of which it purports to be the representative. But again, it makes most sense to discuss such matters in their specificities. It's also, of course, worth remembering that the working class, especially in a country like the US, is disproportionately comprised of non-whites ('people of colour') and that, while Trump attempted to pose as a champion of workers, his main support base is drawn from wealthier classes; further, that given the dispiriting alternatives on offer -- Trump versus Clinton -- a very large proportion of working-class people didn't bother to vote at all: a similar pattern of working-class abstention is evident in many other electoral contests, in many other countries.

**Ani: In the USA, the so-called 'alt right' has brought neo-reactionary ideas into the mainstream. Does the alt-right have a coherent presence in Australia? Has it boosted existing groups?**

Andy: It's a rather tired cliché, but yes, as with many other things, the development of an 'AltRight' in the United States has encouraged the development of something similar in Australia (and in other countries subject to US cultural hegemony). In this context, I think George Hawley's recent book 'Making Sense of the Alt-Right' is useful, especially for the ways in which it discusses the political recomposition of 'conservatism' in the US, and there's some evidence to suggest that similar developments are or may be taking place in Australia. But it seems to me that if the US AltRight is coherent, the Australian AltRight is rather less so. Otherwise, the far-right has often aped elements of the left, and the AltRight is often interpreted as being evidence of a 'culturalist' turn by these political forces, and a response to the supposed dominance of something called 'Cultural Marxism'. It's a political nonsense, of course, but it does provide a useful bucket into which reactionaries of all sorts can pour their resentments. Otherwise, the election of Trump has provided a minor fillip to neo-fascist groupings in Australia, but this has yet to really translate into something politically significant. This may yet happen, but perhaps an example of the influence of the AltRight may be found in the political degeneration of someone like Mark Latham. Once a Labor leader and potential prime minister, he's now largely confined to the fringes of mainstream media, and has even been

an honoured guest -- twice -- on a local neo-Nazi podcast. 'Sad!'

**Ani: What are the international links of neo-fascists in Australia, that you are aware of?**

Andy: International linkages are sometimes formal but more often informal. So there are a number of neo-fascist groups in Australia which are franchises (for example, Blood & Honour, Combat 18, Hammerskins) and there are various 'ethnic' fascisms (Croatian, Greek, Serbian and so on) which are part and parcel of various diasporas. But in the contemporary era, most of these linkages tend to be informal and conducted by the way of the Internet, and especially social media. (It may be relevant to add that, closer to home, Kyle Chapman's 'Right Wing Resistance' groupuscule has found a few boneheaded adherents in Australia, but as in Aotearoa/New Zealand, it's basically a shambles.)

**Ani: What tactics have proved most effective in smashing fascist groups?**

Andy: If by 'smashing' is meant effective disruption, I'd say: constant political pressure. So as a general rule, if fascists go marching hurrah hurrah, it's important that they be countered. If, as sometimes happens, they are gifted a platform by mainstream media, or attempt to weasel their way into some institution, it's important to be able to expose their real agenda and their actual political commitments. Exposing fascist lies, ridiculing their pretensions to mastery, and presenting life-affirming alternatives to fascist dogmas -- alternatives based on other political and ethical principles, such as commitments to equality, cooperation, mutual aid and conviviality -- is also necessary. So too, the promotion of critical inquiry and structural analysis as opposed to conspiracist mentalities and political scapegoating. Finally, the following observations by Ken Knabb are germane:

Irrational popular tendencies do sometimes call for discretion. But powerful though they may be, they are not irresistible forces. They contain their own contradictions. Clinging to some absolute authority is not necessarily a sign of faith in authority; it may be a desperate attempt to overcome one's increasing doubts (the convulsive tightening of a slipping grip). People who join gangs or reactionary groups, or who get caught up in religious cults or patriotic hysteria, are also seeking a sense of liberation, connection, purpose, participation, empowerment. As Reich himself showed, fascism gives a particularly vigorous and dramatic expression to these basic aspirations, which is why it often has a deeper appeal than the vacillations, compromises and hypocrisies of liberalism and leftism.

In the long run the only way to defeat reaction is to present more forthright expressions of these aspirations, and more authentic opportunities to fulfil them. When basic issues are forced into the open, irrationalities that flourished under the cover of psychological repression tend to be weakened, like disease germs exposed to sunlight and fresh air. In any case, even if we don't prevail, there is at least some satisfaction in fighting for what we really believe, rather than being defeated in a posture of hesitancy and hypocrisy.<sup>19</sup>

**Ani: Socialist Sue Bolton recently criticised militant antifascist presence at a broader rally<sup>20</sup>. Could you briefly comment on this?**

Andy: I wrote about the event on the blog<sup>21</sup> and some further criticisms were made by Andy Blunden and Lynn Beaton on the 'Arena' magazine blog, to which I also later responded<sup>22</sup>. Sue's account of the events of the day is largely correct in its essentials: there was a rally in the Victoria Street mall in Coburg, and fascists held a rally several hundred metres away in Bridges Reserve. Otherwise: I can't speak to or for Socialist Alternative's actions on the day as I'm not a member and was not part of their contingent; I think it was a difficult situation, but my basic position is/was as follows: I think that it was important for Sue's rally to go ahead without being disrupted by fascists and for the fascist rally to be contained. (In this context, it should be noted that, while the bulk of the fascist rally consisted of members and supporters of the 'True Blue Crew', it was supplemented by a handful of 'United Patriots Front' members and a scattering of (other) neo-Nazis belonging to 'Combat 18' and several boys who later went on to found 'Antipodean Resistance'.) As it became apparent very early on that Sue's rally would not be disrupted -- both because of police saturation and the distance between the two gatherings -- it then seemed to me to be a priority to contain the fascists in the reserve, and to not allow them to march through Coburg as they intended. This was accomplished, despite police action. I suppose it should be added that Coburg is a suburb with a relatively 'diverse' population, with about 40% of residents being born overseas (largely Italy, Greece and Lebanon) and a relatively large proportion of Muslims (between 5 and 10%), whereas the vast bulk of those attending the fascist rally came from outside Coburg and the northern suburbs (many journeyed from outside Melbourne and even

interstate). In summary, despite a media and police scare campaign, many hundreds of locals, including many younger folks, joined the grouping that directly confronted the fascists to keep them penned in and unable to march -- and they've not been back since.

**Ani: What do you say to those who assert anti-fascism goes too far, or replicates fascism?**

Andy: I say, 'Pull the other one, it's got bells on'. More seriously: more often than not, I think this arises from a profound misunderstanding of the nature of fascism, one which applies the term to any instance in which someone or something is thought to be 'authoritarian' or 'overbearing'; this reflects the debasement of 'fascism' as a sensible political term. That said, I do think it's incumbent upon anti-fascists (as well, of course, as other political actors) to think seriously about matters of political principle, strategy and tactics, and to be vigilant in terms of not seeking to reproduce in its organisation and activity the forces which it opposes.

**Ani: What sources or groups would you recommend people follow to keep up with the anti-fascist movement, in Australia or abroad? (In addition to your own channels!)**

Andy: Within Australia, there's relatively few good sources of information on the far right, but occasionally there will appear some media reportage which is useful. In Melbourne, the 'Campaign Against Racism and Fascism' is a campaigning group which is worth following, but I'm unaware of any comparable project outside of Melbourne. There are also several Facebook pages which document fascist and promote anti-fascist activity, for example Anti Fascist Action Sydney<sup>23</sup> and Antifascist Action Brisbane<sup>24</sup>. In the UK, the Anti-Fascist Network<sup>25</sup> is useful, and in the US there are a number of similar, local and regional groupings and projects, for example, New York City Antifa and Rose City (Portland) Antifa. Political Research Associates<sup>26</sup> has published numerous accounts of fascist and far right politics in the US, and Mark Bray's book 'Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook' is recommended reading. Readers may also be interested in the titles being published in the Routledge Studies in Fascism and the Far Right series<sup>27</sup>, especially 'Anti-Fascism in Britain'. In Europe, of course, there are numerous anti-fascist groups and projects; there's also beginning to emerge an anti-fascist community in places like Indonesia. Links to these and many other, related items of interest are available on my blog.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.bopsecrets.org/PS/joyrev1.htm#Some%20common%20objections>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/anti-racist-rally-coburg-media-ignored>

<sup>21</sup> <http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/?p=39934>

<sup>22</sup> <http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/?p=40208>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AntiFascistActionSydney>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AntifascistBrisbane>

<sup>25</sup> <https://antifascistnetwork.org>

<sup>26</sup> <https://politicalresearch.org>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Fascism-and-the-Far-Right/book-series/FFR>

# Fighting the Fash since 1932: a history of Antifa in Germany

By JOJO, a Fightback correspondent based in Germany



*Communist Party of Germany (KPD) headquarters with the historic Antifa symbol, 1932*

With the global rise of far-right movements, socialists and other leftists are looking for strategies to combat these forces. Especially in the US, where the presidency of Donald Trump encouraged Neo-Nazis to be more active on the streets, threatening Jewish and Black people, People of Colour, Queer folks and leftists, interest has been growing in Antifa strategies and these have been debated widely, outside and within the left. Most prominent is probably the question of violence, connected to the cliché of the masked Molotov-cocktail-throwing Antifa activist. However, this is just one aspect of Antifa activism. Antifa strategies were developed in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, but their roots go back until the 30s. In the following article, I will briefly summarize the history of Antifa in Germany and discuss anti-fascist strategies.

In the 1920s and 30s, before the NSDAP (Nazis) came into power, fascists already posed a threat, with two coup attempts and militias like the Nazi SA ("stormtroopers") having a presence on the streets. Nevertheless, left parties and especially the Stalinized KPD (Communist Party of Germany) were

torn between fighting the fascists or building alliances with them against capitalism (which of course involved accepting a shortened and anti-Semitic critique of capitalism). Smaller independent socialist parties and individuals called for a united front against fascism, but neither the KPD nor the mainstream-left SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) were willing to cooperate. The KPD temporarily even held the position that the SPD were the actual fascists. (See article on "social fascism" in this issue – Ed.)

However, on a local basis, grass roots activists of both parties did cooperate in forming defence groups against SA attacks. On 25 May 1932, the KPD called all workers to form local, independent defence units. This was the birth of Antifascist Action and the famous symbol with the two flags. Back then, both flags were red, one representing the KPD and the other the SPD, with the KPD-flag in front, claiming a leading role. The SPD leadership did not join this call for several reasons and remained in the *Eiserne Front* ("iron front"), an alliance with several trade unions and bourgeois parties, which failed to resolutely oppose the NSDAP. Apart from Antifascist





*Contemporary antifascist flag*

Action, anarcho-syndicalist youth groups also carried out militant attacks against the SA.

All these obviously did not succeed in preventing Fascism, but the concept of local independent cross-faction militant anti-fascist groups was born here, and would later be adopted by anti-fascists in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the 1970s, the “old” Nazis who were active in the fascist party NPD were joined by Neo-Nazis. In order to counter fascist demonstrations, the Kommunistischer Bund (KB), an organisation with roots in Maoism, developed a concept that would become the starting point for the Antifa movement. They formed local and regional initiatives which were open to anti-fascists from all factions, but did not form alliances with other organisations. Their activism involved counter-protests and militant attacks against Nazis and the police that protected them, as well as research about Nazi organisations, their supporters and networks. Other typical Antifa concepts such as the Black Bloc or “Rock against the Right” concerts were also initiated by the KB.

The 1980s brought a new cycle of left wing struggles, such as the peace movement, the antinuclear movement and the squatters’ movement. A lot of radical leftists favoured loose, flat organisational structures in opposition to the so-called K-groups (such as the KB). These were known as the “autonomous” left, referring to the similar Autonomia movement in Italy. This included autonomous Antifa groups that were founded all over the country in the 1980s. In November 1981, KB and other K groups as well as autonomous Antifa groups from northern Germany formed the Northern-German Antifa Meeting to coordinate their actions and exchange information. This was the first regional Antifa organisation.

Autonomous Antifa groups and KB both saw their antifascism in connection with a critique of capitalism, imperialism and the bourgeois state, but did not always share a consistent program. One major conflict was, for example, the question if Antifa should focus more on reacting to Nazi demonstrations and activities with militant direct action, or if it should politically campaign for a ban on the NPD. Nevertheless, further regional Antifa alliances were formed in southern and western Germany. Antifa magazines that exposed Nazi organisations or published discussion papers were also founded in the 80s.

In the 1990s, the annexation of the GDR (East Germany) triggered a rise in nationalist sentiment and therefore also Nazi movements. Nazis as well as ordinary citizens carried out pogroms against asylum seekers and other migrants in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Hoyerswerda and other places. In reaction to this, more people joined Antifa groups.

At the same time, the group Autonomous Antifa (M) Göttingen expanded traditional Antifa strategies and started doing professional press work and artsy agit-prop actions. They also published a discussion paper on autonomous organising that called for a more formalized way of organising and the formation of anti-Nazi alliances with other groups and organisations. Practically speaking, they also formed broad alliances to protest against Nazi centres, but were still present as a black bloc within these protests.

Together with several other Antifa groups, Autonomous Antifa (M) formed the Antifaschistische Aktion/Bundesweite Organisation (AA/BO, Antifascist Action/Nationwide Organisation). The AA/BO did nationwide campaigning oriented around the ideas of the AA(M)’s discussion paper. Besides their anti-fascist commitment, member groups shared a

loosely formulated anti-capitalism, but not a consistent program. Their symbol was an interpretation of the historic Antifa logo that looked slightly different, with the flags facing the right side, symbolizing the attack on the far right from the left. Also, the minor flag was now black, representing Anarchism instead of Social Democracy. This is still the most common Antifa symbol world-wide today. Other Antifa groups, who found the organisational structure of the AA/BO too strict, formed the Bundesweite Antifa Treffen (BAT, nationwide Antifa meeting), that was organised more loosely, but also included more groups than the AA/BO. The BAT dissolved in 1999.

Antifascists also faced repression, most famously with the police investigating the AA(M) under Section 129a of the German Criminal Code (forming a “terrorist organisation”).

In the early 2000s, Antifa faced two new developments that questioned their existing strategy. One was the new SPD/Green coalition government publicly taking a stand against Neo-Nazis and calling for an “uprising of decent people”. For many Antifa it was unclear how to react to this, since so far Anti-fascism had been an exclusive feature of the radical left. The other was the debate between the *Antideutsche* (“anti-German”) faction and the Anti-Imperialist faction. This debate is quite complex and specific in the German context. For this article, we can only summarize that Antideutsche are pro-Israel while Anti-Imperialists are pro-Palestine.

Due to this debate, a nation-wide Antifa conference in 2001 failed and the AA/BO dissolved. However, this debate became more and more unimportant in the following years, with most Antifa groups identifying as undogmatic or anti-nationalist instead of Antideutsch or Anti-Imperialist. Some radical leftist organisations such as Ums Ganze and Interventionistische Linke were formed<sup>1</sup>. However, despite many of their member groups being (former) Antifa groups, especially of Ums Ganze, these do not focus solely on anti-fascism and thus are not typical Antifa organisations. Despite not having a nation-wide organisation, Antifa did have some major successes, especially in shutting down Europe’s biggest Nazi demonstration in Dresden with the alliance “Dresden Nazifrei”. In this alliance, Antifa groups abandoned the practice of militant attacks in favour of an action consensus of passive sit-in blockades that made this broad alliance possible, involving even SPD politicians.

In recent years, more and more Antifa groups such as the Antifaschistische Linke Berlin dissolved, and activists shifted their focus to other struggles such as fights against gentrification, based on the analysis that anti-fascism alone is not sufficient in building a revolutionary movement. At the same time however, Germany, like many other countries, saw a rise of far-right populist movements and a new far right

party, the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). Traditional Antifa tactics, which worked quite well on rather small Nazi organisations, could not stop the rise of a party with such a large membership base, which is also increasingly seen by the media and political establishment as a legitimate and democratic party. One attempt to modify traditional Antifa strategies is the campaign “Nationalismus ist keine Alternative” (NIKA, “nationalism is no alternative”), initiated by Ums Ganze. NIKA combines small local creative actions against the AfD that are designed for attention on social media with nationwide mobilisations against AfD party conferences. It also connects the critique of the AfD with the critique of the “fortress Europe” anti-migrant policy and its supporters from all parties<sup>2</sup>.

Traditional Antifa strategies have been successful in fighting Nazis, combining researching their organisations, publicly outing Nazi cadres, attacking them and blockading their demonstrations. However, as I have shown above, they have always had to adapt new developments. In the US, Antifa tactics have been lately adopted successfully and led to fascist Richard Spencer claiming that “Antifa is winning”. However, many of the strategies working well in the US at the moment have stopped functioning in Germany. For example, police are nowadays sufficiently prepared that actual blockades of Nazi demonstrations are becoming very rare. In addition, an exclusive focus on anti-fascism is not enough to build a revolutionary movement. While traditional Antifa strategies are totally necessary to fight Nazis, they often demand secrecy and cannot involve large numbers of people. While the left needs to be determined to fight Nazis, it also needs to build a broad base for the struggles of the working class and all exploited and oppressed groups.

---

<sup>1</sup> On these post-autonomous organisations, see <https://fightback.org.nz/2015/08/16/germany-movements->

<sup>2</sup> On the AfD and the NIKA campaign, see <https://fightback.org.nz/2017/05/03/the-alternative-for-germany-achronicle-of-the-rise-of-a-far-right-party/>

# Why we say: no platform for fascists

By JOHN BELL

originally published at:

<http://www.socialist.ca/node/3398>

**T**he climate of Islamophobia and anti-immigrant racism that we see being stoked in Europe and in the US since the election of Trump is on the rise here in Canada. Reports of verbal and physical attacks on Muslims—individuals as well as homes and places of worship—are on the rise. There has also been a spike in anti-Semitism.

The worst, the terrorist attack on a Quebec City mosque by Alexandre Bissonnette, resulted in 6 murdered and 19 wounded while attending Friday prayers.



## Canadian fascists

Emboldened by explicit and implicit racism in the media and mainstream political parties, the far right is openly organizing and taking to the streets. White supremacist groups in Toronto, Calgary, Hamilton, Ottawa, and elsewhere have seen racist rallies outside mosques. Muslim women have been assaulted and bullied in broad daylight in stores and on public transit.

The far right is organizing under many banners: the Proud Boys, PEGIDA, Soldiers of Odin, Rise Canada, La Meute, and others. In the mix are strange bedfellows like the Jewish Defence League and Canadian Hindu Advocacy (Ron Banerjee); they make strategic alliances with white supremacist organizations on the basis of shared extreme hatred of Muslims.

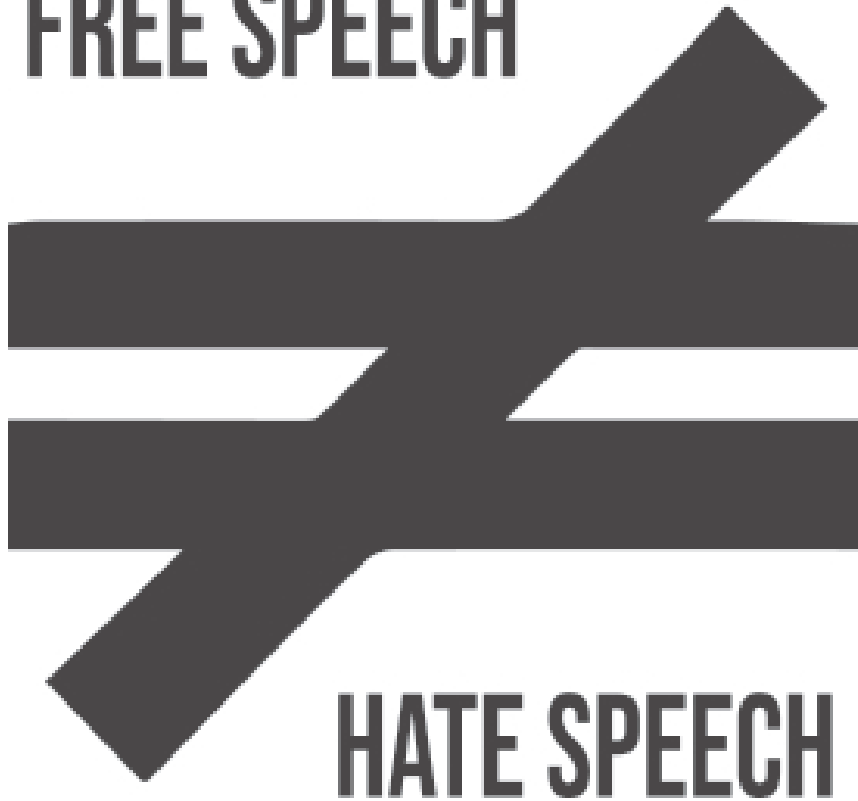
Then there are the mouthpieces of the fascist right. Best known is Ezra Levant's Rebel website, which has been instrumental in far-right organizing. It has launched racist "celebrities" like Lauren Southern and introduced fascists like Gavin McInnes, founder of the Proud Boys and author of a vile video rant: "10 Things I hate About Jews". And there are bottom feeders like Kevin J Johnson who try to use social media to spread hate and then holler about their rights and freedoms when they are blocked and shut down.

## No freedom for violence

When we argue that there should be no platform for such racists and fascists—that their meetings should be shut down, their attempts to rally and march must be counter-picketed and blocked—it is not just because what they say is offensive. It is not a question of whether we like or agree with



# FREE SPEECH



# HATE SPEECH

what they have to say. Hate speech does not end as speech. It is a call to violence, a tool to organize attacks on vulnerable communities.

When fascists get a platform, violence against Muslims goes up. Attacks on synagogues and Jewish cemeteries increase.

Fascism aims to destroy democracy and concentrate power in the hands of a “racially superior” minority. It requires the destruction of freedom of speech. It requires destroying mass organizations of working people, unions and free press. It uses the blinkered limitations of liberalism to destroy it. Today’s fascists try to re-brand themselves as something less threatening than their past incarnations. They are “alt-right” and pretend to be champions of free speech. They pretend they aren’t racists, just champions of white people and European culture and “values”. They try to keep their real ideas and aims in the dark.

## Free speech

We must be clear about freedom of speech: it is not an abstraction, an absolute. When racist thugs disrupt a school board meeting shouting hatred for all Muslims and ripping up the Qur’an, that is not “free speech”. When fascists picket outside a mosque it is not just “free speech”, it is intimidation and an

attempt to incite violence. We have a right and a duty to prevent it, through superior numbers and organization.

Fascism cannot be defeated by logical argument. By every logical argument there was no question that Omar Khadr deserved an apology and compensation. By every logical argument Donald Trump should not occupy the White House. Fascism grows by an appeal to the irrational, fear and hatred. It has to be smashed.

Some worry that denying a platform to the racist and fascist right would somehow justify similar treatment of the far left. This ignores what is being argued from those platforms: they argue for division, scapegoating, hatred and squadist violence; we argue for greater solidarity, more democracy and mass action.

The fascist movement has a lot going for it today. Tory politicians cynically use racism to build their base—as with the Omar Khadr backlash. Tories are not necessarily fascists, but they create an atmosphere that emboldens the far right and helps them recruit. We cannot under-estimate the threat it poses in our communities, schools and workplaces. Socialists must make it a top priority to expose it and organize to stomp it out wherever we find it. That means: no platform for fascists.



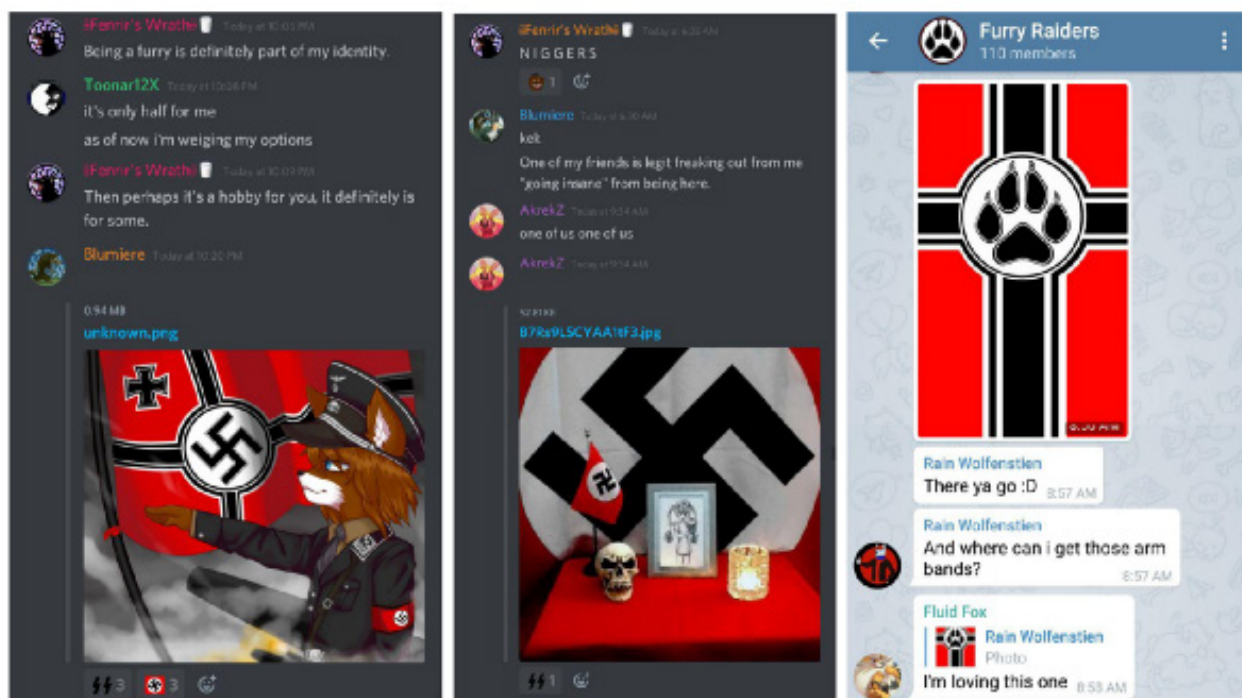
## How White Nationalism Courts Internet Nerd Culture

---

DEO is a union Millwright in the United States and a 12-year member of the Furry Fandom who spent 6 months infiltrating multiple Alt-Right and neo-Nazi online groups observing and recording how they recruited, organized, and operated. Deo can be found on Twitter: @DeoTasDevil. Artwork courtesy of Ren, @RattusDingus via Twitter. Originally published at <https://medium.com/@DeoTasDevil/how-white-nationalism-courts-internet-nerd-culture-b4ebad07863d>

Nerd and online communities are a ripe harvesting ground for neo-Nazism. Bigotry festers like a wound and preventing society and subcultures from going gangrene is about knowing the warning signs, identifying it early, and preventing the spread. White supremacist groups have strategies that work on selling people on their beliefs. I'm going to discuss a few here and how these tactics are especially appealing towards internet nerd spaces.

ment are online communities that warmly welcome in new members. Once lured into such a group the recruit is given a surge of support, validation, and esteem boosting. The new members are told they belong, that they may not fit in real life social cliques but that they fit into this group, and that the other group members care about them. Hours will be invested in grooming the new recruit, befriending and talking with them. Active chats are appealing to those who are bored and isolated and only

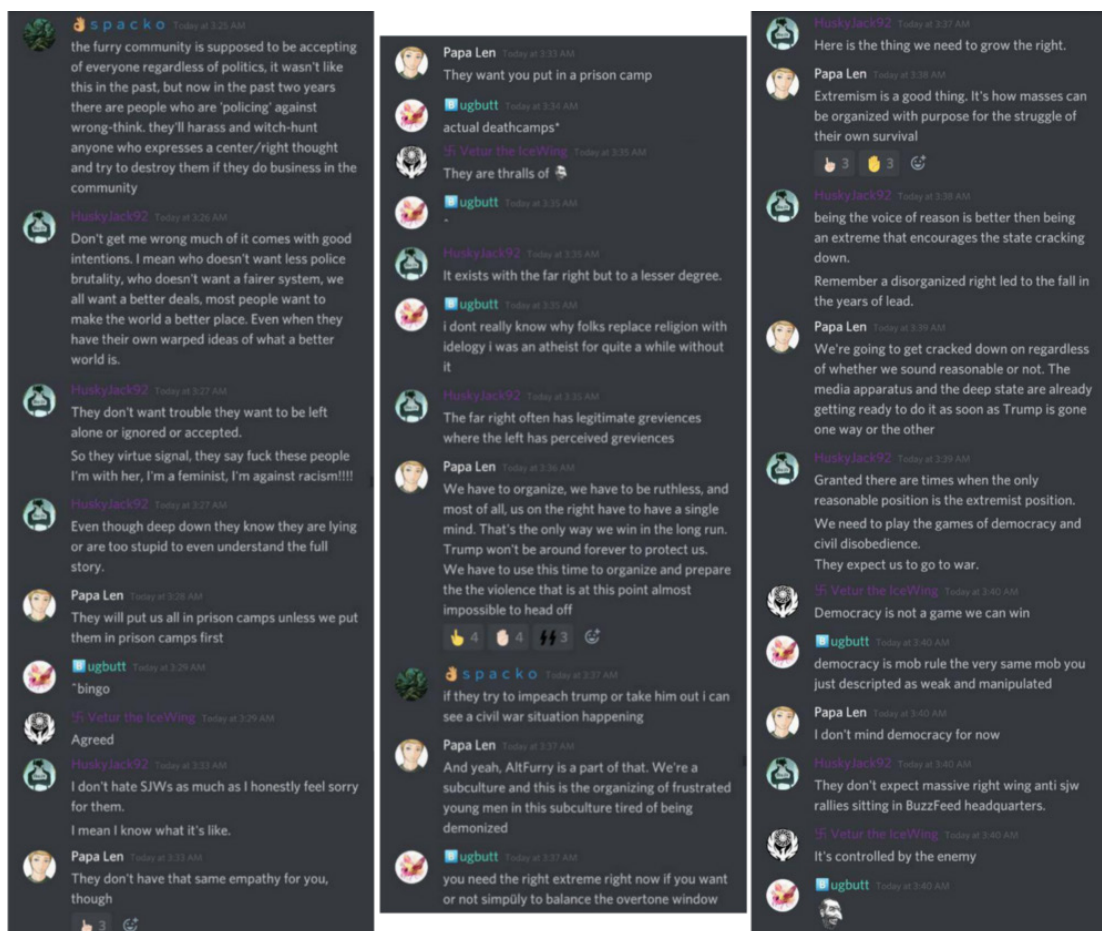


Isolated, lonely, insecure, unfulfilled, bitter young men who feel that society at large has abandoned them and denies them the opportunities they feel entitled to are prime targets. White supremacist recruiters approach these angry young men and tell them that they are special and have a greater destiny. They are told that every white man carries this legacy mantle of superiority because every white man bears the lineage of advancements and accomplishments of all white men throughout history. That every white man is imbued by his fore fathers with an important destiny to defend the white race. Thus the lonely NEET [*Not in Education, Employment or Training*] need not achieve anything himself to still hold this position of power and supremacy, his accomplishments that the recruiter can flatter him for is simply that he was born with white skin. These tactics transform nerdy bullied young men into proud white warriors, making them useful tools for the promotion and growth of the white supremacist ideology and agenda. Neo-Nazi groups know utilizing the insecurity and loneliness in their targets is an effective recruiting and radicalizing tactic especially when tailored to the large audience of socially awkward internet nerds.

Another key strategy in white supremacist recruit-

want some human contact but have trouble getting it elsewhere due to social awkwardness. The white supremacist group offers a sense of community and belonging and slowly cultivates in the recruit into a sense of loyalty towards the group. For those desperate for friendship or to feel included this is an incredibly potent lure. These groups can have darker tactics as well, with leaders telling their members that they cannot leave or return to people outside of the group. Many reasons are given but most commonly this inability to leave is posed as there being some boogeyman outsider, like "SJWs", will eventually toss them out, bully them, ostracize them, or attack them. Leaving the group is framed to members as ruining their only chance at fun, true friendship, or inclusion. Members are told they must remain in the group because within the group is the only place it is safe to express themselves freely, that their opinions are too radical to be accepted elsewhere, or that their 'truth' will be brutally suppressed by outsiders, and within the group are the only people who will ever accept them. The outside world is cast as some nebulously ominous power that is held back from harming the member only by the protection of the group. All of this forges fear and friendship together into chains that trap people into toxic white supremacist spaces.





*Leaders scaring members telling them that if they leave the white supremacist group eventually they will be put in prison death camps*

White supremacist groups offer simple appealing answers that typically allow the recruit to avoid personal responsibility and instead blame all problems on outside forces. His lack of friendships lies in public schools indoctrinating children with liberal lies, his lack of a romantic partner is the fault of Feminism, his lack of a college degree is due to equal opportunity laws and affirmative action, his lack of employment is the fault of globalist elites, his lack of fulfilment in his life is due to societal anti-whiteness, his unhappiness is the fault of others thrusting ‘white guilt’ upon him. The message towards new recruits will be tailored to exactly what they desire to hear, and what personally affects the recruit most. The pieces of which the neo-Nazi recruiter slowly builds towards tying as the fault of Jews, Muslims, people of colour, LGBTQ, anti-racists, and other outsiders.

This tactic means dehumanizing ‘enemies’ first so that the recruit does not empathize with the people that the white supremacist group targets. If someone is trying to make you believe that certain groups of people are innately better or worse than others it is important that we recognize it as the red flag it is and catch it early as a dehumanizing tactic. Dehumanizing the designated enemy group is the necessary first part of bigotry. Once the recruit believes that some group of people is somehow lesser or beneath them it becomes easier to ratio-

nalize the violent end goal actions against them. Common tactics that white supremacist groups use in convincing others of their truth are cherry picked statistics, debunked pseudo-science, racist memes, jokes, and straight fear mongering lies about certain groups of people.

White supremacists often pass off pseudo-science as absolute fact in a gambit for legitimacy in pushing their ideas and agendas. IQ is a pseudo-science that white supremacists have clung to for decades and is re-emerging in commonly shared memes. The IQ pseudo-science “facts” most of those memes and YouTube videos cite is from one particular book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray that collected much of the bad bogus science on biological determinism and racist prejudice and compiled it into one text. The Bell Curve at the time of publication was lauded as scientific and unbiased. New Republic editor Andrew Sullivan defended devoting an entire magazine issue to promoting the book saying that, “The notion that there might be resilient ethnic differences in intelligence is not, we believe, an inherently racist belief.”<sup>1</sup> Other critics at the time as well promoted the book as sound science. However, since then the research and data has been debunked. Adolph Reed described *The Bell Curve* thusly: “What really drives this book, and reflects the diabolism of the Murray/

**#Fenrir's Wrath** Today at 12:30 AM

1.47 MB  
[image.png](#)



**Gadwin** Today at 12:10 AM  
yeah. but instead your country will suddenly go on war for shit like usa and eu wanting to take control of these countries


**Joey** Today at 12:11 AM  
Imperialist America was better than globalist America  
Fuck up Spanish territories just because

**#Fenrir's Wrath** Today at 12:13 AM  
The white race will take its rightful place. This will be ensured by any and all means in Europe. The 14 words will be ensured  
We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.

Point is they are talking shit and it's just virtue signalling. They are too cowardly to realise fascism is the solution

**Fabrice** Yesterday at 11:53 AM  
A nice video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKy3fCvMz-8>

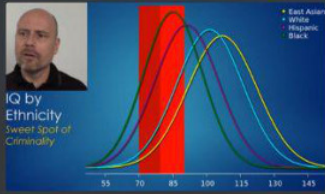
YouTube  
**What is the JQ / Jewish Question? Greg Johns...**  
**Demography Is Destiny**  
Do Jews have a separate group identity? Do they have a concept of "Jewish interests"? How have these things affected the European societies that Jews have se...



*"JQ" is a common neo-Nazi term referring to "Jewish Question" about Jews as an evil and the goal of Jewish genocide*

**Papa Len** Today at 6:12 PM

76.37 KB  
[Race\\_IQ\\_molyneux.jpg](#)



**Papa Len** Today at 6:18 PM  
Denying the connection between race and IQ is like believing in the tooth fairy at this point

**birb** Today at 6:19 PM  
the parents will die out  
leaving only mixed race child  
mixed race child marries another mixed race child  
thus destroying all races  
and mixing them into one

**Vetur the IceWing** Today at 6:19 PM  
No identity  
No history  
No heritage

**#Fenrir's Wrath** Yesterday at 11:56 PM  
I couldn't do the math questions on the first test. It said my IQ was 91

**Gadwin** Yesterday at 11:56 PM  
kek

**Holo the Wise Wolf** Yesterday at 11:56 PM  
kek

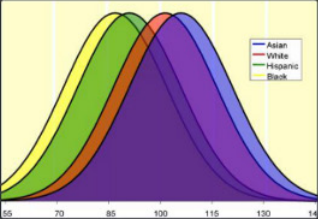
**#Fenrir's Wrath** Yesterday at 11:56 PM  
91 is below white average

**royalemagician** Yesterday at 11:57 PM  
95-100 is the average, yah?

**#Fenrir's Wrath** Yesterday at 11:57 PM  
The average is 100

**Ponesupremacy** Yesterday at 11:57 PM  
Still smarter than the average beaner.

19.26 KB  
[Sketch-4race-transparent.png](#)



**TheBigKK** Today at 3:53 PM  
**@Gadwin** It's natural to be annoyed by centrists. Let me put this in perspective. Centristism is the belief of the average individual. Mental Retards have IQ's of around 70, Average IQ is 100ish, and my IQ is 135. That means the average individual/centrist is a mental retard in comparison to myself. Aren't you annoyed in the pretence of someone with down syndrome? That's what I feel like around you guys. (edited)

**TheBigKK** Today at 3:52 PM  
You could literally, scientifically be categorized a downy in comparison to me (edited)  
lol  
and I have several friends with even higher IQs, one of which was offered a genius' scholarship at Cambridge  
you normies are functioning on such a lower cognitive level it's a joke  
When did I say the word degenerate?  
strawman

**TheBigKK** Today at 3:55 PM  
at it's finest  
whose the SJW now?





Herrnstein combination, is its claim to demonstrate black intellectual inferiority. They use I.Q. to support a 'twofer': opposition to affirmative action, which over-places incompetent blacks, and the contention that black poverty derives from the existence of an innately inferior black underclass. ... The Bell Curve is embedded in the intellectual apparatus of the crypto-fascist right."<sup>2</sup>

The claims within The Bell Curve had already been thoroughly debunked more than a decade prior by Steven Jay Gould's classic work on the pseudo-science behind eugenics, *The Mismeasure of Man*. But the 1994 public enthrallment with The Bell Curve and its garbage science remains, especially in white supremacist circles where sections are readily used as fact to persuade others. The research data that Murray and Herrnstein relied on for their central claims about the connection between race and intelligence was funded by the Pioneer Fund, described by the London Sunday Telegraph as a "neo-Nazi organization closely integrated with the far right in American politics."<sup>3</sup> The Pioneer Fund's mission is to promote eugenics, a philosophy that maintains that genetically unfit individuals or races are a threat to society. The cited research that was used in the book is just as questionable as its funding. Richard Lynn the source of much of the book's claims on Asian IQs is described by Murray and Herrnstein as "a leading scholar of racial and ethnic differences."<sup>4</sup> Lynn has stated, "What is called for here is not genocide, the killing off of the population of incompetent cultures. But we do need to think realistically in terms of the 'phasing out' of such peoples.... Evolutionary progress means the extinction

of the less competent. To think otherwise is mere sentimentality."<sup>5</sup> Which is a thinly veiled promotion of ethnic cleansing. If there was any doubt, Lynn makes clear which "incompetent cultures" need "phasing out" when he in 1994 clarified in an interview "Who can doubt that the Caucasoids and the Mongoloids are the only two races that have made any significant contributions to civilization?"<sup>6</sup>


Murray and Herrnstein also relied heavily on the research of J. Philippe Rushton, who is once again funded by the same Pioneer Fund. Rushton's work continued the Victorian pseudo-science of cranial measurement as measure of intelligence, but Rushton's measurements of intelligence do not stop at measuring skulls branching into the size of breasts, buttocks and genitals as measurements of intelligence. Rushton told Rolling Stone that "It's a trade-off: More brain or more penis. You can't have everything."<sup>6</sup> Sexual deviancy aside, in a 1986 article Rushton claimed that the Nazi war machine owed its success and strength to racial purity, and stated that shifting demographics were endangering our "Northern European" western civilization. Rushton co-authored another paper that argued that blacks have a genetic propensity to contract AIDS because of their "reproductive strategy" of promiscuous sex, the debunked pseudo-science that different races of humans use r and K selection reproductive strategies.<sup>7</sup> Rushton was also removed from public spaces like shopping malls on multiple occasions for yelling at people about their penis size and asking to know the distance that they could ejaculate, so much so that his university had to reprimand him for the continued behaviour. The point being that the data

Donald J. Trump    
@realDonaldTrump

Following

"@SeanSean252: @WayneDupreeShow  
@Rockprincess818 @CheriJacobus "

### USA CRIME STATISTICS ~ 2015





- BLACKS KILLED BY WHITES ~ 2%
- BLACKS KILLED BY POLICE ~ 1%
- WHITES KILLED BY POLICE ~ 3%
- WHITES KILLED BY WHITES ~ 16%
- WHITES KILLED BY BLACKS ~ 81%
- BLACKS KILLED BY BLACKS ~ 97%

SOURCE: Crime Statistics Bureau - San Francisco


RETWEETS 2,051 LIKES 2,569

3:05 PM - 22 Nov 2015

 Non Dildo'd Goyim   
@CheesedBrit

Follow

### USA CRIME STATISTICS ~ 2015



- BLACKS KILLED BY WHITES ~ 2%
- BLACKS KILLED BY POLICE ~ 1%
- WHITES KILLED BY POLICE ~ 3%
- WHITES KILLED BY WHITES ~ 16%
- WHITES KILLED BY BLACKS ~ 81%
- BLACKS KILLED BY BLACKS ~ 97%

SOURCE: Crime Statistics Bureau - San Francisco

RETWEETS 107 LIKES 73

8:17 PM - 21 Nov 2015



The Bell Curve and other racial IQ pseudo-science is based on has massive credibility gaps.

Neo-Nazi groups often use statistics in order to pose as a legitimate political stance. These statistics are more often than not complete fabrications. The above image was heavily cited by those on the right, even to the now current POTUS, and it can be traced back the other above tweet posted by an account that's avatar (the one that looks like a modified swastika) is actually the symbol of the neo-Nazi German Faith Movement.<sup>7</sup> From the crime statistics that are blatantly false<sup>8</sup> to the cited source of the "Crime Statistics Bureau" being something that does not even exist<sup>9</sup>, statistics like this are made up and shared online all the time to bolster a false sense of scientific legitimacy to what is only irrational racism. These lies should be seen for what they are and denounced, neo-Nazis pretend that falsified information can lend them scientific authority and legitimacy and it is dangerous because to the uninformed such lies may be taken as fact and open the door for further radicalization by the neo-Nazi recruiter or rhetoric. The people neo-Nazis target long for feeling intelligent, informed, rational, and scientific- and neo-Nazi groups are more than happy to manufacture falsehoods to feed those desires.

We are a visual species, images catch out attention far more than text and simple ideas by image spread far faster and wider than written ideas that take more time to digest and read. Memes are used by white supremacist groups as propaganda materials, created for viral spread and normalizing white nationalism. To many in the white supremacist groups memes are even cited during debate as one would normally cite a peer reviewed research paper. Similar to image macros and memes, YouTube videos and channels promoting alternative facts have arisen. These videos, often unsourced or poorly sourced, are pushed as educational. This isn't a new tactic, it's similar in how VHS tapes like the 1993 "Waco: The Big Lie" which promoted the conspiracy idea that law enforcement murdered the Branch Davidians and along with Ruby Ridge was proof to the Aryan Nations that the Government was targeting white people. These tapes used to be passed around, spread, and mailed within neo-Nazi communities. YouTube, Reddit, Facebook, Daily Stormer, and Twitter in part are host to a modern resurgence of those neo-Nazi videos and articles. The modern versions are faster and more dangerous than the old mail-order tapes that they replaced due to the accessibility, ease of content creation, and that the target audiences (teenage children or deeply isolated and emotionally insecure young men) are often the most vulnerable for these manipulation tactics and lies especially when such propaganda videos come packaged with other appealing things like video games and anime. YouTube pundits will enter-

tain and feed their viewers exactly what they want to hear. Especially among young people YouTube is often viewed as a primary news source.<sup>10</sup> The audiences and fans trust and defend their favourite YouTube personalities and the videos made are seen as alternative news sources for current events. Many videos are baited as revealing the truth that has been suppressed only to their intelligent followers, with channels standing as single points of information and misinformation. The videos are quick to watch, easy to share and spread, and require low effort on the part of the person using them as educational material. A three-minute YouTube video about Hitler loving animals is far more accessible to young people than accurate historical books that can seem long, boring, and tedious.



**Leather Jackal**

@OryxFox

Replying to @HawkwolfRL

More like these fine folks here, radical traditionalists. #altfurry



2:37 PM · 18 Apr 17

In the group that I observed, new members were forced to watch a list of racist and conspiracy laden YouTube videos that more senior white supremacist leaders had picked out for their "red pilling". For those unfamiliar with the term "red pilling" it is a cult like indoctrination, programming a new member that what the group promotes is the only real enlightened truth and that these truths had been kept hidden from them by evil forces controlling society. The term was made common by the misogynist Reddit group by the same name and the online collection of other interconnected misogynist-based groups often referred to as the "manosphere". The Red Pill claims that men are the only truly oppressed, that all relationships are purely transac-

tional and often zero-sum games, that women are incapable of love, and that men are superior and must master themselves to then return society to a dominating patriarchal hierarchy where women are second-class citizens owned by their fathers and husbands. The online communities of white supremacists and the communities in the manosphere have long merged and borrowed from each other. *Breitbart*, now seen as the standard bearer publication for the Alt-Right in its early points was heavily written for and by manosphere red pill bloggers. These online hate groups have converged and merged, borrowing from each other and promoting each other's propaganda.

Jokes are powerful. People are far more likely to actively participate in communities when group interaction is entertaining and humorous. Neo-Nazi groups will use humour as a coating to spread ideas and sow the seeds of bigotry. They are well aware that their messages will be spread and shared in far larger ranges when packaged appealingly as jokes. They know that jokes will be spread organically through friend groups making the work far easier for a neo-Nazi group to reach the larger audiences. Masking ideology in humour also allows plausible deniability for when the recruiter pushes the target

too hard too fast, it is easy to lighten up and back off as "just a joke" and then later once the target's guard lowers to resume the indoctrination. Humour and entertainment are quietly weaponized in these fashions then to reach larger audiences and to hold on to the attention and energy of current members.

These groups often have a public face or more appealing selling points that are spoken of publicly which rely heavily on dog-whistles and crypto-fascist terminology. Neo-Nazi groups in public use coy terms to circumvent the much-despised term Nazi. Often, they will call themselves other terms, because very few people in the public would willingly join a Nazi group. The group rebrands under a different word while promoting the same neo-Nazi agenda in private. Often the words chosen for the rebrand is meant to invoke things that are appealing to the public, such as science and freedom, but many are just ways of avoiding the Nazi word. Such rebrands are: white nationalist, white supremacist, ethno-statist, race realist, racial science believer, identitarian, racial isolationist, alt-right, whites rights activist, fascist, neofascist, national socialist, segregationist, traditionalist, nationalist, ethno-nationalist, demographic nationalist, human biodiversity advocate, demographic preservationist, western

□ **Fixing the Alt Right Anonymous** (ID: [DgJQZvs](#)) 🇺🇸 08/13/17(Sun)12:44:29 No.137278655 ➡ >>137280123  
 >>137280442 >>137281246 >>137281350 >>137282112 >>137282187 >>137282290 >>137282503 >>137282867 >>137283498 >>137284205  
 >>137284706 >>137284708 >>137284925 >>137285041 >>137285065 >>137285281 >>137285472 >>137285488 >>137285500 >>137285633  
 >>137285872 >>137285932 >>137286636 >>137287168 >>137287246 >>137287755 >>137287881 >>137287976 >>137288375 >>137288562  
 >>137288857 >>137290156 >>137290896 >>137291015 >>137292672 >>137293328 >>137293582 >>137293798 >>137294079 >>137294129  
 >>137294664 >>137294791 >>137295260 >>137295796 >>137296340 >>137296974 >>137297222 >>137298104 >>137298284 >>137298711  
 >>137299504 >>137299513 >>137299538 >>137299905 >>137299914 >>137300955 >>137302379 >>137303503 >>137303909 >>137304322  
 >>137304525 >>137309120 >>137309579 >>137309698 >>137312528

Don't get trapped in an echo chamber where you can no longer relate to normies.

Pretending that Charlottesville didn't massively push the average white person away is really stupid. We have a chance to actually make changes now that Trump has shifted the Overton window to the right, but we need to be smart and make the movement appealing to the AVERAGE white person:

> Disavow all Nazi/KKK edgelord LARPer. There is no way to lose public support quicker than going around making Nazi salutes and holding Wiki torches while chanting "Jews will not replace us". This instantly makes the average person hate you.

> Build a populist movement with realistic, incremental overt goals. Repealing the 1965 Immigration Act and replacing it with something that both limits total immigration and prioritizes white immigration is an actual tangible political goal.

> Keep the long-term goals covert, and don't ever reveal your power level. Talking openly about an white ethnostate only leads to failure and the average public turning against you, so disavow anyone who reveals his power level. Leftists will recognize dog whistles and know we're crypto, but normies won't listen to them.

> Start first by focusing on multiculturalism, because it lot easier for people to see how non-white countries produce culture that is at odds with our values. People like Peter Thiel should be the voice of the alt-right, not cringelords like Richard Spencer.

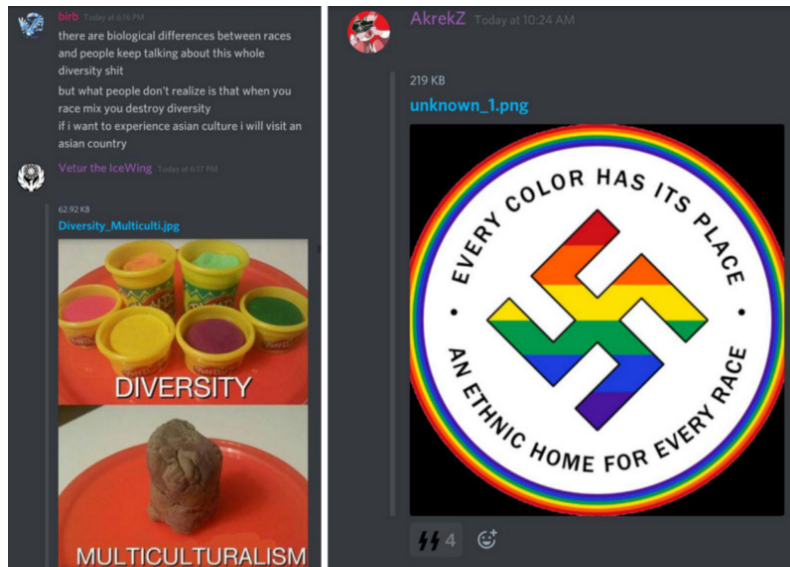
> Hold actual speeches (with the media invited) by intelligent and well spoken speakers that can tailor their speech to the average person who has been brainwashed by egalitarianism their entire life.

> Get pro-white people into media and educational positions. Examine and copy the successful tactics of cultural marxists. Liberal morality is deeply embedded in modern society, and it's going to take a long time to change that.

If you actually want to gain mainstream appeal, the movement has to change to be positive and not just LARPing as KKK/Nazis.

*A chan post outlining some crypto-fascism basics after Heather Heyer was murdered in Charlottesville by a white nationalist*





*Typical meme using “preserving human biodiversity” as a more appealing colourful repackaging of apartheid. Also, an attempt to misuse the rainbow as a symbol of the fascist right and sow confusion among pro-LGBT people.*

chauvinist, neoreactionary, nativist, isolationist, America first, anti-multicultural, anti-globalist, anti-miscegenation, etc.

Lee Atwater, Campaign Manager for Ronald Reagan once said, “You start out in 1954 by saying ni\*\*er ni\*\*er ni\*\*er. By 1968 you can’t say nigger- that hurts you it backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states’ rights and all that stuff. And you’re getting so abstract now that you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all of these things you are talking about are totally economic things and the by-product of them is that blacks get hurt worse than whites. And subconsciously maybe that is part of it.”<sup>11</sup> Crypto-fascism is similar in that it repackages old racist ideology under new more palatable terms in order to persuade and push the general public towards the neo-Nazi’s end goals. Breitbart held an article introducing republicans to the new online more radical Alt-Right. In it were quite a few good

examples of crypto-fascism doublespeak. A crypto-fascist will argue these common talking points in bad faith to promote their end ideology, claiming that their group is not racist it just stands for: <sup>12</sup>

“A preference for homogeneity over diversity, for stability over change, and for hierarchy and order over radical egalitarianism with their chief concern being the preservation of their own tribe and its culture.”

“mostly white, mostly male middle-American radicals, who are unapologetically embracing a new identity politics that prioritizes the interests of their own demographic.”

“frightened by the prospect of demographic



displacement represented by immigration.”

“egalitarianism flew in the face of every piece of research on hereditary intelligence ... asking people to see each other as human beings rather than members of a demographic in-group ignores every piece of research on tribal psychology.”

“helped spark the ‘human biodiversity’ movement, a group of bloggers who strode eagerly into the minefield of scientific race differences.”

These are common crypto-fascist claims, attempting

white moral world of many video games, clear evil enemies on one side with the player on the side of good. Members see themselves as valiant soldiers in an ongoing war, which many neo-Nazis call the Ra-Ho-Wa (short for Racial Holy War). This war drives in them a newfound purpose of being part of a struggle greater than themselves.

The idea of being white as a virtue to defend is far from new, in 1929 Wilbur Joseph Cash in his article "The Mind of the South" wrote “[Whites] must protect the right of their sons in the legitimate line, through all generations to come, to be born to the great heritage of the white race.”<sup>13</sup> For members who were previously isolated, depressed, or felt powerless and unfulfilled this new sense of purpose



to normalize and promote racism, segregation, or ethnic cleansing as being natural or scientific and beneficial to society at large.

The neo-Nazi recruiter feeds their recruits this mythos that empowers the recruit as an important noble hero in a valiant struggle for the future of the world. Grandiose language and hyperbole builds the recruit up as important and needed. The supplied narrative is very self-centred (almost narcissistic), placing the believer in a central heroic role, the white supremacist group members being the noble few who hold this deep personal revelation of the real hidden truth and are struggling against powerful evil enemies that control society, fighting on behalf of the ignorant masses that must be converted to the righteous cause. It's like living one's entire life in a self-insert fanfiction. It fulfills desires in them for importance, for value, for purpose, for being needed and powerful, they can live their lives in a LARP as a protagonist hero in a fantasy epic. The shared narrative of the world being a zero-sum game is especially enticing to people used to the black and

and conviction is addicting. They feel empowered by righteousness for their actions towards those they feel are enemies of the neo-Nazi movement. Members rationalize that those enemies, people the group targets, are deserving of such treatment. Attacks on designated enemies is driven by leaders as extremely necessary, that at this moment in time the fate of society or the future of the white race hinges upon the actions of the white supremacist group. That if the recruit does not join and actively promote the group's ideas that the entirety of civilization will be doomed.

This mythos is critical to the perpetuated idea of "White Genocide". White genocide is the neo-Nazi idea that immigration and intermarriage among races will eventually in the future lead to all children being born mixed race and thus ending the existence of the white race. There is a massive fear surrounding this, as it is seen as the true horror that must be fought. The oath of many neo-Nazis is the Fourteen Words, "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." The idea of white genocide is a massive cornerstone in

the rationalization of violence and genocidal eugenics that eliminate other races. Roger Pearson another white nationalist who gets money from The Pioneer Fund said it himself, "If a nation with a more advanced, more specialized or in any way superior set of genes mingles with, instead of exterminating, an inferior tribe, then it commits racial suicide."<sup>14</sup> The idea of people marrying whomever they want and people being free to mingle between class and race terrifies the white supremacist and out of that fear they feel justified for violence and murder.

## What are we then to do about this?

Hopefully now you know a bit more about what to look for in how to spot these tactics and a bit about why fascist white supremacy appeals to some people. Hopefully you will not fall for the rhetoric tricks

and recruitment traps. In this we must look out for each other. If someone you know begins to espouse this ideology it is important that it is confronted. Ask the person you know why they feel that way, ask them if they feel alone or powerless, ask if they need a friend, discuss why dehumanizing others is wrong, and strive to facilitate empathy. Part of saving our friends and acquaintances who feel isolated or sad or angry from being preyed upon by bigot groups is us being supportive while clearly condemning hateful ideology or beliefs. This of course is not a call to go out and actively befriend deeply fanatical neo-Nazis, those sorts of people require a deeper deprogramming that is not feasible for most people to attempt. What I am talking about is catching conversion early and nipping it in the bud, protecting ourselves and people who are already our friends from these manipulation tactics.

---

## Sources

1. Andrew Sullivan, The New Republic's Editorial Page. *The New Republic*, October 31, 1994.
2. Adolph Reed Jr., "Review of The Bell Curve, by Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein." *The Nation*, November 28, 1994. <https://www.thenation.com/article/looking-backward-2/>
3. B. MacIntyre, "The New Eugenics". London *Sunday Telegraph*, March 12, 1989. Cited in E.M., Kramer, "The emerging monoculture: assimilation and the "model minority", 2003. City: Praeger. pp. 118, 302. ISBN 0-275-97312-3.
4. "Charles Murray." Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/charles-murray>
5. Richard Lynn, "Review: A New Morality from Science: Beyondism." by R.B. Cattell. Pergamon Press, New York, 1972. Pages xvii and 482. *Irish Journal of Psychology* 2 #3 (Winter 1974).
6. Jeffrey Rosen and Charles Lane, "Neo-Nazis!" *The New Republic*, October 31, 1994.
7. Charles Johnson, "We Found Where Donald Trump's "Black Crimes" Graphic Came From." *Little Green Footballs*, November 22, 2015. [http://littlegreenfootballs.com/article/45291\\_We\\_Found\\_Where\\_Donald\\_Trumps\\_Black\\_Crimes\\_Graphic\\_Came\\_From](http://littlegreenfootballs.com/article/45291_We_Found_Where_Donald_Trumps_Black_Crimes_Graphic_Came_From)
8. "2014 Crime in the United States Expanded Homicide Data Table 6." Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigations. [https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/expanded-homicide-data/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_6\\_murder\\_race\\_and\\_sex\\_of\\_victim\\_by\\_race\\_and\\_sex\\_of\\_offender\\_2014.xls](https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/expanded-homicide-data/expanded_homicide_data_table_6_murder_race_and_sex_of_victim_by_race_and_sex_of_offender_2014.xls)
9. Jon Greenberg, "Trump's Pants on Fire tweet that blacks killed 81% of white homicide victims." *Politifact*, November 23rd, 2015. <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2015/nov/23/donald-trump/trump-tweet-blacks-white-homicide-victims/>
10. Jeffery Gottfried and Elisa Shearer, "News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2016." Pew Research Center. <http://www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/>
11. Rick Perlstein, "Lee Atwater's Infamous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy." *The Nation*, November 13, 2012. <https://www.thenation.com/article/exclusive-lee-atwaters-infamous-1981-interview-southern-strategy/>
12. Milo Yiannopoulos and Allum Bokhari, "An Establishment Conservative's Guide To The Alt-Right." *Breitbart*, March 29, 2016. <http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2016/03/29/an-establishment-conservatives-guide-to-the-alt-right/>
13. Wilber Joseph Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Knopf, 1941), 116.
14. Southern Poverty Law Center, "Roger Pearson." <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/roger-pearson>

# Antifa vs. Milo Yiannopoulos: Who won?

by MARK BRAY. Originally published at <https://www.salon.com/2018/01/31/antifa-vs-milo-yiannopoulos-who-won/>

A year has passed since black-clad anti-fascists smashed windows and launched fireworks to shut down right-wing provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos' scheduled speech at the University of California, Berkeley, on February 1, 2017. Unsurprisingly, pundits immediately condemned these "masked hoodlums who arrived from off-campus" for denigrating Yiannopoulos' "freedom of speech." The year of conflict on campus that ensued around speakers like Yiannopoulos, Richard Spencer and Charles Murray provoked fascinating debates about speech rights that tap into our most deeply held principles. But pundits also objected to the "no-platforming" of Yiannopoulos for another reason: that "such actions turbo-charge his fame."

Berkeley witnessed "self-defeating violence" that was a "gift" to Yiannopoulos, according to The Chicago Tribune. A column in The New Yorker argued the protest was "a tactical error" that "served his ultimate interests." "Milo Yiannopoulos feeds on your violent protests," The Daily Beast claimed, because they allowed him to cultivate his "image as a victim of liberal intolerance." Ultimately, "resorting to violence is particularly stupid," The Telegraph asserted, because it plays into Yiannopoulos' "oh-so-obvious trolling."

As surely as the sun rises in the east, smashing windows to shut down a self-described "provocateur" was allegedly destined to propel Milo Yiannopoulos into the media stratosphere. But did it? A year is a reasonable enough sample size to start assessing the real effects of the Berkeley protest and the accuracy of pundit predictions.

The media frenzy that followed on the heels of the Berkeley protest seemed to confirm the assumption that bonfires benefitted Yiannopoulos. Pre-orders of his book "Dangerous" skyrocketed and Bill Maher fawned over him on "Real Time." Overnight, Milo Yiannopoulos had become a household name.

Yiannopoulos' fortunes started to change a little over two weeks later, however, when a video surfaced showing him making pro-pedophilia remarks. Immediately this revelation caused Simon &

Schuster to terminate his lucrative book deal, the conservative conference CPAC to cancel his planned speech at its annual event and hard-right news site Breitbart to urge his resignation from his editorial post. Though this fiasco was largely self-inflicted, the timing of the release of this 2016 video shortly after the Berkeley protest suggests that enhanced scrutiny accompanied his newfound fame. As the self-described "supervillain of the internet" was about to be welcomed into the conservative mainstream at CPAC, the conservative "Reagan Battalion" site unearthed his pedophilia comments. Yiannopoulos seems to have flown too close to the sun. Despite the media predictions that militant protest would "only help" his brand soar, it became painfully obvious that not all publicity is good publicity when you have skeletons in the closet.

More skeletons were unearthed when BuzzFeed published an exposé revealing Yiannopoulos' links to prominent white nationalists and neo-Nazis. As the months fell off the 2017 calendar, Yiannopoulos was denounced by his former mentor Steve Bannon, defunded by the right-wing Mercer family and booted out of his role as a weekly contributor for The Daily Caller after one column. (The Daily Caller editor who brought him on was fired as well.) Even his own lawyers abandoned him in his suit against Simon & Schuster for terminating his book contract.

The impact of the Berkeley demonstration and other anti-Milo protests is most obvious when we examine the trajectory of Yiannopoulos's speaking engagements. From February 2016 through the infamous Berkeley incident on February 1, 2017, Yiannopoulos scheduled approximately 61 public speaking appearances (most for his "Dangerous Faggot Tour"). Of those 61, twelve were shut down by protesters or cancelled by administrators for security concerns. Notable examples other than Berkeley included Black Lives Matter protesters who confronted Yiannopoulos at DePaul University in May 2016 (a planned return to DePaul in September was cancelled by the administration) and students and allies at UC Davis who successfully blocked the entrance to an event Yiannopoulos had scheduled





**CANCELLED**

with Martin Shkreli in January 2017. Another seven of his talks were cancelled for logistical reasons. At least five of the 42 that occurred were interrupted in one way or another: Rutgers students smeared themselves with fake blood, UCLA students attempted to block the entrance to the event, and University of Minnesota, Twin Cities students interrupted him with air horns.

How did the media spectacle of bonfires and fireworks at Berkeley affect Yiannopoulos's ability to organize future speaking engagements? Robert Schlesinger, writing in U.S. News & World Report, was confident back in February 2017 that the actions of "the masked vigilantes . . . no doubt guaranteed another dozen speaking engagements" for Yiannopoulos. Actually, he failed to deliver even that modest number of public talks over the next year. Though Yiannopoulos attempted to schedule about 16 public talks between February 2, 2017 and February 1, 2018, six of those planned talks were cancelled at universities like San Diego State or private venues like the Patio Theater in Chicago because of a mix of popular pressure and "security" concerns. The United Liberty Coalition attempted to bring Yiannopoulos to Phoenix, but they gave up after they were rejected by 62 different venues. Eight of his talks, including all seven in Australia, were listed as occurring in a "secret location" to deter protesters. One of the only openly advertised events Yiannopoulos managed to organize was the woeful "Free Speech Week" at Berkeley in September 2017, which collapsed into a 20-minute talk in front of an audience of 50-100.

This dramatic decline in his public appearances over the past year is directly correlated with the precedent set in February 2017 at Berkeley. Love it or hate it, images of targeted property destruction in northern California provided a powerful incentive for venues to avoid potential headaches.

Reasonable people will disagree about the influence of the Berkeley protest on Yiannopoulos' plummet. What is not debatable, however, is that media predictions about the inevitable ascent of Milo Yiannopoulos after getting shut down in Berkeley were wrong. A year later, already banned from Twitter, Yiannopoulos now has no access to media platforms like *Breitbart* and the *Daily Caller*, no publisher for his books, no mega-donors to bankroll him and dwindling opportunities for public speaking. In an age of social media and 24-hour cable news cycles, Yiannopoulos is already old news. The short-lived nature of his stardom is even evident on Google Trends which shows that after spiking in early 2017, the frequency of subsequent Google searches for his name have plunged to 2016 levels.

Yet, this discussion misses the most crucial aspect of protests at Berkeley, Rutgers, DePaul, UCLA and other campuses. Pundits asked how protests


would affect Milo Yiannopoulos' public profile. They failed to ask more important questions: How do Yiannopoulos' events and the rhetoric he spews endanger those he targets, and how can they fight back? How these protests affect Yiannopoulos (or other far-right figures like Richard Spencer or Ann Coulter) is interesting; how they affect resistance to the far right is essential. Lost in such debates is the astounding mobilization over recent years of a broad anti-racist movement encompassing Black Lives Matter groups, labor unions, faith communities, immigrants' rights coalitions, anti-fascist networks, feminist collectives and LGBTQ organizations that will not just ignore attempts to make white supremacy great again. We must situate the property destruction at Berkeley, heckling at UMASS Amherst, the air horns at Minnesota, the blockade at UC Davis, and other acts of disruption within this process of movement-building to understand their full effect.

Strategic and tactical debates rage within these circles, as they do in all movements. But by smashing windows rather than allowing Yiannopoulos to out undocumented students, as Berkeley officials claimed he was about to do, by dousing oneself in fake blood rather than let him promote rape culture, by barricading the entrance to his event rather than give him an opportunity to verbally attack a transgender student (as he had at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee), these students and their allies prioritized the safety of those under attack and expanded the range of tactics available to resist the far right.

More fundamental than the tactical repertoire, however, is a shared understanding that it is dangerous to allow the far right to normalize racism, xenophobia and homophobia (for even the openly gay Yiannopoulos penned an article title "Gay Rights have made us Dumber, It's Time to Get Back in the Closet"). If we truly believe that Black Lives Matter, then we cannot accept the discursive legitimacy of anti-black racism that argues otherwise. If we are committed to taking seriously those who have spoken out to say #MeToo, then we cannot shrug off the anti-feminist promotion of patriarchal values as a simple difference of opinion. We may disagree about how to resist, but resist we must.

This requires expanding our view beyond the capriciousness of celebrity. As long as there is demand for outlandish misogyny or Islamophobia, the next Milo will step up to bask in the spotlight. Protest is not just about influencing an intended target, but building power.

Would shutting down Milo Yiannopoulos at Berkeley in February 2017 propel him into stardom? A year later we can see that pundits offered us the wrong answer. Yet, if we focus on resistance, we can also see that they were asking the wrong question.



---

# Why the Far Right's Rallying Cry of a Leftist 'Civil War' Is No Laughing Matter

---

By ELIZABETH KING and PATRICK STRICKLAND.

Originally published at

<https://psmag.com/social-justice/why-the-far-rights-rallying-cry-of-a-leftist-civil-war-is-no-laughing-matter>

In late September, RefuseFascism.org, a group associated with the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, announced it would be holding a nationwide protest on November 4th against the Trump administration. Within days, a far-right Facebook group, Vets Before Illegals, posted a video to Facebook claiming that “antifa” had declared a “civil war” on police and all white people. “If you’re white, it will be open game on you,” the video warns, after claiming that antifascists are “fundraising for weapons.” The Vets Before Illegals Facebook page has nearly half a million followers, and the fabricated claims of an antifascist civil war, now broadly labeled a conspiracy theory, eventually spread to other far-right platforms, including *The Gateway Pundit* and *InfoWars*.

While the claims that antifascists are planning to commence a civil war are unfounded and outlandish, the consequences for RefuseFascism.org organizers is real. Sunsara Taylor, a spokesperson for RefuseFascism.org, tells *Pacific Standard* that the group and its affiliates have been receiving “thousands of threats, including death threats.” Taylor explains that RefuseFascism.org and others planning to participate in the protests have been the subject of both “targeted and blanketed threats,” including promises of sexual violence and anti-Semitic abuse.

For Taylor, the rally scheduled in Austin, Texas, is of particular concern, where there have been reports of several far-right groups planning to show up with guns to counter-protest the RefuseFascism.org event. In response to the threat of gun-wielding right-wingers, RefuseFascism.org has put out a call

for anyone near Austin to come out and stand with the anti-Trump demonstrators. “I think there is a conscious awareness on the parts of people spreading this misinformation to incite violence against legitimate protests,” Taylor adds.

The fears of activists are not unfounded—experts of far-right violence say there’s genuine cause for concern. Daryl Lamont Jenkins, an antifascist researcher and founder of the One People’s Project, a right-wing watchdog group, explains that the “antifa civil war” conspiracy theory and others like it are “part and parcel” of the far right. Although he describes the paranoia over an impending civil war as a “political stunt,” Jenkins also says he believes there is a “real threat of [physical] violence.”

The allegations of a leftist “civil war” are just the latest in a string of far-right conspiracy theories that date back to the colonial period, when there was significant anxiety over slave uprisings. During the 2016 presidential election season, a (debunked) conspiracy theory emerged claiming that Hillary Clinton was involved with a child sex-trafficking ring being run out of Comet Ping Pong, a pizza shop in Washington, D.C. The theory, which became known as Pizzagate, was a favorite talking point of *InfoWars*’ Alex Jones. Pizzagate grew in popularity on the right, adding fuel to the fire of anger surrounding Clinton, while becoming something of a joke in leftist and even mainstream circles. That is, until it wasn’t: On December 4th, 2016, 28-year-old Edgar Maddison Welch took his AR-15 to Comet Ping Pong and opened fire on the restaurant (there were no injuries). Welch later said he was motivated by the



rumors he'd heard about the shop's supposed connection to human trafficking.

Then, in July of this year, Lane Davis, a 33-year-old Skagit County, Washington, resident and member of the white supremacist so-called "alt-right," allegedly stabbed and killed his father, Charles, during an argument between the two in which Lane accused Charles of being a "leftist pedophile." The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that Davis, who frequently posted conspiracy-laden YouTube videos under the name Seattel4Truth, was obsessed with conspiracy theories regarding "liberal pedophilia." It was his belief in these particular conspiracy theories that ostensibly led to the violence against his father: according to the SPLC, Davis accused his father of pedophilia before allegedly fatally stabbing him.

Davis' obsession with anti-liberal pedophilia conspiracy theories echoes the content of Pizzagate, which centered on baseless accusations of child sex trafficking. Members of the far-right have recently helped underscore unfounded theories about liberals and pedophilia. During protests over a talk given by Mike Cernovich, an "alt-right" conspiracy theorist, at Columbia University in October, alt-righters, posing as antifascists, planted a sign that read: "No White Supremacy, No Pedo Bashing, No Mike Cernovich." The sign also featured a logo for the North American Man/Boy Love Association, a now-defunct organization that advocated for pedophilia.

Members of the far right have also turned up in numbers to confront leftists based on false rumors and misinformation. Jenkins points to a slew of false claims and Internet-based conspiracies that prompted far-right demonstrations this year alone. Back in June, another far-right hoax claimed that antifa planned to destroy the gravestones of Confederate soldiers in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. When far-right rally organizers and attendees showed up, they found one problem: None of the Confederate graves had headstones to begin with.

Earlier that month, militia groups and gun-toting far-rightists descended on Houston's Hermann Park to defend a monument of slaveholder Sam Houston after a Facebook event purported that leftists and antifascists were planning to tear it down. Upon arriving, the Confederate-flag waving group of would-be counter-demonstrators found that there was, in fact, no antifascist demonstration and there was no one there with intentions of removing the statue. Although conspiracy theories of this nature rarely conform with reality, they still serve a useful purpose for those with influence in the far right.

Referring to the claims that antifascists would rise up this weekend, he said, "Obviously, the police don't think that anything is going to go down because we would have been snatched up by now."

Matthew N. Lyons, an independent researcher affil-

iated with the antifascist blog Three Way Fight and the author of several books about the far right explains that conspiracy theories "offer an explanation of power relationships that are emotionally compelling" to the people who believe them. Because of the emotional response these theories elicit, they can serve as "powerful tools for mobilizing people, recruiting supporters, and even just getting attention" for right-wing causes, Lyons explains.

The emotional effects of these theories is evident by the commentary on the video posted by Vets Before Illegals. One Facebook user wrote of the protesters, "Shoot to kill orders need to be given for these idiots...." Another commenter alluded to the militarized power of the police against protesters, writing: "We are able to flank police with armored tanks and military. They should be careful what the[y] ask for! American Patriots will stand armed and ready." A slew of other comments refers to violence against protesters, and at least one mentioned that Trump will "not tolerate" the alleged civil war.

Clearly, anti-left conspiracy theories are resonant for sectors of the right, and not just among fringe vigilantes—the influence of conspiracy plots can now be found in the White House.

In August, Trump re-tweeted a tweet from the popular far-right activist Jack Posobiec, who helped spread unfounded rumors about Pizzagate. Alex Jones has also said that he occasionally speaks with the president (a claim that can be considered spurious given the source, but the president and Jones have a documented relationship). In fact, Trump even appeared on InfoWars in 2015, and praised the far-right conspiracy theorists' reputation as "amazing," Media Matters for America reported at the time. MMFA has also reported that Trump advisor Roger Stone said in May that Jones and the president are occasional interlocutors.

According to Heidi Beirich, the director of the SPLC's Intelligence Project, the fact that conspiracy theorists could have an ear in the White House is cause for major concern. Conspiracy theories spread by members of the far right are now "shaping policy," Beirich says. "They're impacting the real world, and it's incumbent on all of us to take these matters seriously."

# Blair Peach:

## Aotearoa's anti-fascist martyr

---

Originally published at <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/37978/35+years+since+they+murdered+Blair+Peach,+cops+still+get+away+with+murder>

On 23 April 1979 the fascist National Front (NF) called a public meeting in Southall town hall, west London. The meeting was in support of its general election candidate J Fairhurst.

The NF had come third in London's local elections and had big expectations for the meeting, which they organised symbolically on St George's Day.

The Nazis' choice of Southall was significant. In 1976 schoolboy Gurdip Singh Chaggar was stabbed to death there by racists, and the NF hoped to further intimidate Southall's large Asian population.

But there was resistance. The day before thousands marched from Ealing town hall to Southall to hand in a petition against the meeting.

On the day of the meeting parts of west London fell silent as bus, textile and food workers struck in protest against the Nazis. And the Anti Nazi League (ANL) organised a demonstration against the NF.

The ANL had been founded two years previously to combat the rise of the NF and other fascists. Thousands of Asian workers walked out of factories to join the protest.

The Nazis and indirectly the police had taken a beating two days earlier in Leicester—and the police would take their revenge in Southall on that day.

Van after van of cops arrived. They provoked anti-fascists by writing "NF" in the condensation on the windows.

The Special Patrol Group (SPG) turned out in force. A particularly brutal unit, it launched a police riot against the demonstration.

At the time The Daily Telegraph wrote,

Police had cornered about 50 demonstrators against the churchyard walls. As we watched, several demonstrators were dragged crying and screaming to the nearby police station. Nearly

every demonstrator had blood flowing from some injury.

It was as a committed member of the ANL and the Socialist Workers Party that 33 year old teacher Blair Peach attended the demonstration.

He was a white man originally from New Zealand.

Before the protest began he had been called a "paki" whilst drinking with friends in a pub.

While he was leaving the protest, Blair received a blow to the head from a blunt instrument delivered by a SPG officer. He died in hospital that evening.

The death of this revolutionary socialist and anti-fascist captured headlines around the world.

But to this day none of the six SPG cops involved in his death have ever been held to account for their actions on that day.

Blair Peach wasn't the first person nor the last to be killed by police, but the legacy of his death 35 years ago in particular continues to hound them.

The continual violence against black and working class people was creating a solid layer of mistrust and hatred of the police.

And at the same time the NF openly organised on the streets and terrorised black families.

The apparently unstoppable rise of the NF and the untouchable character of the police culminated in the Battle of Lewisham in 1977.

On 13 August the NF organised a march through Lewisham, south London, where they hoped they would intimidate the large black population who lived there.

Thousands of anti-fascists took to the streets and fought back against the Nazis and the 5,000 police who lined up to protect them—and won.

Lewisham lit the spark that would soon lead to the



founding of the ANL of which Blair would become a member.

The aim of the ANL was to build a mass united organisation of black, Asian and white people that would fight the fascists at every turn and prevent them from organising unopposed.

The ANL built a mass propaganda campaign—holding meetings and distributing tens of thousands of leaflets which exposed the fascist nature of the NF.

Anti-fascists threw themselves into building ANL groups in schools, colleges, communities, workplaces and trade unions.

It was the existence of this confident and strong united front that meant when Blair was killed in 1979—the police would not be allowed to forget it.

Blair's killing came to symbolise more than the death by police of a committed revolutionary socialist and anti-fascist. It was the lightning rod for the anger that had built up for years around police violence and racism.

That anger hasn't gone away, because in the 35 years since Blair Peach's killing police brutality has continued.

Since then, Harry Stanley, Jean Charles de Menezes, Christopher Alder, Mark Duggan, Sean Rigg and Ian Tomlinson have all died after coming into contact with police.

Today we see the police lurch from crisis to crisis and their reputation has tumbled due to exposures of institutional racism and corruption.

There is a wider mistrust of the police than there was before Blair Peach was killed, and that is because the fight to get justice for him exposed their nature.





# Fightback's Ten-Point Programme

Fightback stands for the following core programme, and for building institutions of grassroots power in the working class and oppressed groups to bring them about:

1. **Constitutional transformation** based on indigenous self-determination and workers power. Indigenous and worker co-ops to operate as guardians over public resources.
2. **Secure, appropriate and meaningful work** for those who want it, with a shorter working week. The benefit system to be supplemented with a Universal Basic Income, removal of punitive sanctions.
3. **International working-class solidarity.** Close the Detention Centres. Open borders to Australia and Aotearoa, full rights for migrant workers. Recognise Pasefika rights to self-determination, Australia and Aotearoa to contribute to a 'no-strings' development fund for Pacific nations. Opposition to all imperialist ventures and alliances; neither Washington nor Moscow.
4. **No revolution without women's liberation.** Full funding for appropriate, community-driven abuse prevention and survivor support, free access to all reproductive technologies, public responsibility for childcare and other reproductive work. The right to full, safe expression of sexuality and gender identity.
5. **An ecosocialist solution** to climate change. End fossil fuel extraction, expand green technology and public transport, and radically restructure industrial food production.
6. **Freedom of information.** End corporate copyright policies in favour of creative commons. Public support for all media technologies, expansion of affordable broadband internet to the whole country. An end to government spying.
7. **Abolish prisons,** replace with restorative justice and rehabilitation.
8. **Universal right to housing.** Expansion of high-density, high-quality public housing, strict price controls on privately owned houses. Targeted support to end involuntary homelessness.
9. **Fully-funded healthcare** at every level. Move towards health system based on informed consent, remove inequities in accident compensation, opposition to "top-down" efforts to change working people's behaviour.
10. **Fully-funded education** at every level, run by staff and students. Funding for all forms of education and research, enshrining indigenous knowledge as a core part of the curriculum.

For an expanded discussion of this programme, please see the pamphlet *What Is Fightback?*

# Also available from

# **Fightback**

*Struggle, Solidarity, Socialism*

## Pamphlets



## Magazine back issues



**All publications \$5 each + \$5 shipping and handling**

(bundle of 5 publications \$15 inc. shipping and handling. All prices in NZ dollars.

Some items may no longer be available, so include contact details with order.)

Send your order to: [fightback.australasia@gmail.com](mailto:fightback.australasia@gmail.com)

Or: PO Box 10-282, Dominion Road, Auckland 1642, New Zealand



